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THE MOTHER

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By Sholem Asch

THREE CITIES

SALVATION

MOTTKE THE THIEF

THE WAR GOES ON

For Younger Readers

IN THE BEGINNING

THE MOTHER

By Sholem Asch

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION

By Elsa Krauch

G·P·PUTNAM'S SONS

New York

1937

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SHOLEM ASCH

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This book was first translated into English and published in this country several years ago. I express my gratitude to my present publishers for bringing out this new version in a translation which I believe does justice to the book.

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PART I

CHAPTER I

Father, Mother, the Family

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FATHER was studying the Book of Esther. It was shortly before the Feast of Purim, the time at which the Esther-scroll is recited in the synagogue.

The winter had been a long and severe one. Outside, the snow was melting, Earth's heavy white winter-covering was gradually disappearing, and the sunlight slowly brought to light everything which had been hidden beneath the snow and ice.

The footpaths of pounded clay were transformed into a single great puddle, and the streets became impassable; the frozen "lakes" opened up, and neighbors could communicate only by shouting to one another, for to meet in person was too difficult.

Within doors the air felt warmer and balmier. The frosted little windows shed the ice-flowers which had blossomed on their panes all winter long, and the moisture trickled down, making it impossible to look through the glass and to distinguish what was going on outside.

The room was filled with steam and smoke. The smoke came from the little kitchen; it could not find a way of escape through the sooty chimney.

The heavy clothing, which during the course of the winter had grown almost as fast to the body as a secondary skin, began to feel weighty and cumbersome, and everybody wanted to cast it off.

At this season father began to rehearse the reading of the Book of Esther; and when his voice rang out during the into-

nation, solace descended upon the world, hope sprang up anew —the first greeting of spring seemed to have arrived.

When father was rehearsing the Book of Esther the house had to be so quiet that you could hear a pin drop. As a matter of fact, whenever father was at home the house had to be so quiet that you could hear a pin drop (especially when he lay down to take his little afternoon nap). But when father was studying or practicing his Scripture Reading, everybody had to walk about on tiptoe, had to speak softly—indeed, to breathe softly—and even that was disturbing.

And so—as we have said—as soon as father did either one of two things, whether he lay down on the bumpy sofa to take a nap, or whether he began to recite Scripture, a sacred silence had to reign in the house.

But in the house there were—Heaven protect them—more than enough children, ranging from Shloime Chaim, the cobbler's apprentice, to the very youngest girl, who bore the name of her grandmother, and who was crawling about on the floor.

So it is easy to imagine how difficult it was for mother to keep the children quiet while their father slept or studied. Every one of the children had a special habit, a special way of asserting himself. Moishele "the Ox" began it all—Moishele, whom the teacher had sent home from elementary Hebrew school because his mother had not paid his last three months' tuition fee. This Moishele considered that very time which his father devoted to the rehearsal of the Book of Esther as the time best suited for teaching his younger brother, Joine Gedalie (called Joine after his father's father, and Gedalie after his mother's father, and by a nickname, too, which etiquette will not permit us to record here)—for teaching this same Joine Gedalie how to whistle through the teeth, with lips kept tightly closed.

Their mother, who was standing near the stove, and who was afraid that the bit of thickened soup which she was cooking might run over and diffuse an unpleasant odor in the room,

tried to quiet the little boys by giving each a blow in the ribs. Then the younger one, Joine Gedalie (with the unmentionable nickname), filled with the spirit of *joie de vivre*, broke into a hearty laugh and began to whistle through his teeth.

Father looked up from his book, pushed his spectacles up on his forehead, and looked, first at mother and then at the little boy with the charming nickname; at the same time he recited, pitching his voice as high as possible and as loud as he could:

"In those days King Ahasuerus of Shushan sat on the throne of his kingdom."

Mother said to Moishele "the Ox," "Well—now do you see what you have done?"

The boys quieted down and decided that they preferred to go out on the street to wade through the various "lakes" and "rivers," even though they were inadequately shod.

When quiet reigned in the house once more, and nothing was to be heard except the rattling of the machine upon which Shloime Chaim, "the eldest"—who was at the time the only breadwinner in the family—was sewing shoe-uppers for the shoemaker of the village, father's cantillation continued to increase in volume and fervency, and finally attained to ecstasy. Now father was competing with the rumbling of the machine, to see which one would come out ahead in tempo and rhythm and which could drown out the other in volume. Steadily did father's voice gain in triumphant strength.

For nobody in the world was happier than father when he was rehearsing the weekly portion of his Sabbath reading. But his happiness reached its greatest height when he was reciting the Book of Esther. For it was this Book which father preferred to every other portion of the Bible. When he recited the Book of Esther he imagined that he was at King Ahasuerus' court in person, sitting at the great festive table, where wine was served in golden vessels, and every one could drink as much as he liked. And when he came to that passage which narrates how King Ahasuerus became intoxicated "so that the

heart of the King was merry with wine," and gave the command that Queen Vashti was to be brought in, then father caressed the sounds in his throat as though it were a shame to allow these words to escape the enclosure of his teeth. The King is sitting on the throne, he holds the golden scepter in his hand, Queen Esther appears before him with the crown upon her head and sinks down upon her knees; she finds mercy in his sight, he holds out his golden scepter toward her, and says, fondling the words lovingly in his throat: "What is thy request, Queen Esther, and why art thou afraid? If thou shouldst even ask one-half of the kingdom, it shall be given unto thee...."

Mother was standing near the stove in the kitchen; and when she heard how father was rehearsing the Book of Esther, how he turned over every word as though it were a priceless pearl, her heart ran over with joy; pride arose within her, pride in her husband, the learned Reader of Scripture, and the thought came to her: How do I deserve such happiness? It seemed to be the atonement for all the suffering which life had allotted to her.

When father's rehearsing went ahead successfully, and the words and intonation came forth as he liked to hear them, then he was the happiest man in the world. He had a vivid imagination, but never did it soar so high—so high that even the impossible became possible for him—as when he was rehearsing the Book of Esther. The magical charm which surrounded Ahasuerus' court seemed to have infected father.

Mother was quick to notice that father was in good humor. At such times she loved to indulge in a little self-pity for father's special benefit. Sarah Rifke never complained, not to any one; no one comforted her. But—when she noticed that her Ansel was in good humor, then she did like to have him feel a little sorry for her—not that she had any particular grievance at that moment, but just because it made her feel so good. That is the way it was this time, too. Father closed his book with a magnificent gesture, sighed a little (also because it made

him feel so good), and went up to Sarah Rifke, who, holding "the suckling" in her arms, stood by the fire; he gave the youngster a light pat on the buttocks and began to speak with an affectation of ill humor:

"Well, what are you going to cook for my supper this evening, Sarah Rifke?"

"Cook for you? Heaven help us, what have I that I can cook for you?"

"Oh, of course you can't cook the kind of supper that was served at the court of King Ahasuerus in Shushan, dear wife," answers Ansel with a smile in his voice.

"Oh, how can one compare the work of human hands with the wonders of the Scripture?" says Sarah Rifke with a sigh, for she sees that her Ansel is in rare good humor.

"Ansel," she goes on to say, "I have certainly nursed quite a few children, but this one"—she passes her apron over the forehead of the child who lies in her arms as though grown fast to her—"this one draws the very life out of me, he quite eats me alive, bless him." Once more she passes her apron over the little one's forehead, and wipes off the cold sweat which has gathered on the warm little head.

"Do you know, dear wife, it really would be best to buy a goat for you, so that you could always have fresh milk," remarks Ansel as casually as though the goat were standing tethered before the house at that very moment. "So many people in town keep a goat; more than one goat could be fed from the leftovers of this household."

During this speech Sarah Rifke regarded her husband questioningly and replied: "Tell me, my dear husband, where are you going to get the money for a goat?"

"How does that concern you? If I tell you that I am going to buy a goat for you, I am going to buy it; certainly you know your Ansel well enough"—he pointed to himself—"to understand that when Ansel says anything he isn't merely speaking empty words; when Ansel says anything, he means it."

Mother answered not a word; she simply sighed. It was one of her well-known sighs.

Ansel exploded at that:

"I promise her a goat, and all she does is sigh! I suppose that means you don't have any faith in my promises?"

Mother knew: she had gone too far this time. For however amiable father's mood might be—and at such times he could be approached as unguardedly as an ordinary person—still his amiability did have a limit, and mother was afraid of transgressing this limit.

"Why should I quarrel with you? Just bring on your goat, then we shall see what is to be done next."

That was too much.

"So, Ansel's promises don't mean anything, is that it?"

"Who says so? On the contrary. Don't you suppose that I would like to own a goat? Just bring it home, give me the opportunity of seeing it here."

"Ah yes, I thought—I thought..." Father calmed down, and put on his quilted winter overcoat. Mother helped him rub the dried mud off the hem and brushed his hat for him. Ansel smoothed down his beard, took up his walking stick and went to the synagogue for evening prayers.

Mother understood that she could not expect any money with which to buy food for supper. For when father returned from the market place with empty hands—(but no, Ansel never did return with empty hands; if he didn't have money, he always brought glib talk of "a goat," "a good business," or "a steamship ticket to America").

That's the way it was this time, too. The minute that Ansel began to speak of "the goat," Sarah Rifke knew that he did not have a groschen in his pocket. For, when he has earned one or two gulden as a commission, he never mentions a goat. In that case he walks into the room, humming a tune slowly, and begins:

"Well, dear wife, I suppose you need a little money for supper, don't you?"

With these words he pulls two gulden out of his pocket and lays them on the table. A knight of old could have profited by taking lessons in deportment from Ansel as to the most gracious manner of delivering prisoners of war to his king; with so magnificent a gesture did Ansel place the two gulden in front of his wife and "deliver" them into her hands. And, as he spoke, he smoothed his mustache with two fingers, grasped his beard with his hand, and said nonchalantly:

"There you have the pike, dear wife, slaughter them, boil them or fry them, and serve them for supper!"

But this time, following the conversation about the goat, mother knew that she need expect no money from Ansel towards buying food for supper. To get a few groschen from "the young man," the sewer of shoe-uppers who was saving money for a steamship ticket to America, was possible only by dint of much quarreling and abuse; and since mother did not want to spoil the good mood into which father's successful rehearsal had just put her, she did not want to approach the "young man." So she turned to her last and well-tried aids, to her cooking-pots.

They were wonderful, those cooking-pots of mother's! They looked exactly like ordinary pots, no different from all the other pots in the world, earthen, black with soot, fire-baked. But still they were different from all other pots; if one regarded them casually, it might seem as though nothing were clinging to the inner surface or their sides; and still mother could get a supper out of them.

Sarah Rifke could "milk" her pots as though they were cows. They never denied her anything. She gave them cold water—and the pots yielded yesterday's carrot soup anew; she gave them boiling water—and the pots returned a royal dish to mother. Just *one* formula of extortion did mother possess for use on her pots—a sigh. When the pots heard mother sigh it was as though she had repeated a secret incantation over them with which she adjured them to supply the pitifully

meager bit of nourishment which was all she demanded for her large brood.

Nor was this strange. The pots simply were not ordinary pots. Mother had been well acquainted with them for years. Several of them she had known even as a child, and her mother had enjoyed the same secret power over her cooking pots. And from her mother she, too, had inherited the pots. There stood the pot with the narrow black stripe and the edge jagged with age; invariably it had been the savior of the family. It was mother's best friend. Never did it refuse her anything she wanted. It understood how to retain the essences of cooked carrots and pickled meat in its edges and corners, and upon its inner surface there always lay an invisible film of fat, as though the pot understood that poor people could not indulge in the luxury of eating up everything at one time, but had to save something for a rainy day. It was to this pot that mother always turned in her hour of need—and now too, when Ansel left her in the lurch with his talk about "a goat," she approached the pot which she had inherited from her mother.

She uttered her secret incantation, a sigh, over it, and she poured water and the leftovers from yesterday's dinner into it; this time she added a few curses too, as a garnish; these were leveled at the two little boys who had just come home from their "lake and river trips" through the streets, with muddy feet.

And just see, soon the pot gave forth from its crevices the fat which had accumulated in it during many years of service; it gave forth the odor of all the dishes which had been cooked in it, and sent out, together with the steam which arose from it, an aroma so tempting that very soon the whole house was filled with an appetizing odor, and all the children gathered in the kitchen to see what good things mother was cooking. And when Ansel returned from the synagogue, and the aroma of the good supper greeted him at the door, his mouth began to water, and bold plans filled his heart:

"Do you know, my dear wife," he began as he came in—"I am going to buy you a permanent seat, after all."

"What kind of a permanent seat?" asked mother, surprised.

"A permanent seat in the synagogue, the one which formerly belonged to Reb Leibusch's deceased wife. He has remained a widower, you know. Now tell me, don't you think you ought to have a permanent seat in the synagogue?"

"Go, go, stop your nonsense!"

As Ansel inhaled the fine aroma which the beneficent cooking pot sent forth, he began to dream of highly-seasoned foods which he would have enjoyed eating at that very moment.

He drew out a piece of cigarette paper and rolled an after-dinner cigarette, using his last bit of tobacco. As he did this he began to enumerate all kinds of marinated and pickled herrings:

"A herring with sliced onions, with a dressing of marinated vinegar—if I had one of those now, I could never resist it; or perhaps a white meaty herring, fat, spiced with pepper, and a sliced pickle on it, that would taste pretty good too; or it might be a smoked herring not too well steeped in brine, but not too dry either, dripping with fat—that wouldn't be so bad, either."

When Sarah Rifke observes how her Ansel is yearning for a little taste of herring, she knows no peace. She doesn't grieve as much when she has to refuse one of the children a piece of bread, as she does when her Ansel yearns for a bit of herring. When this happens, she turns to the only savior of the family. She opens the door and calls:

"Deborah! Deborah!"

Ansel reminds himself that he is the little girl's father and begins to scold:

"Where is the girl? In other families girls of her age have already begun to contribute money at home, but she runs round all day without doing a thing."

"Deborah! Deborah!" Ansel echoes his wife's call, shouting out into the street. After having been called repeatedly, Deborah enters.

The agitated shouts of her parents might well have led one to wonder what kind of apparition this Deborah would prove to be; Deborah, of whom her father said, "in other families girls of her age have already begun to contribute money at home."

But, instead, there enters a girl of ten or eleven who looks like a nine-year-old, who has a long thin neck upon which the dainty head is poised like a flower on its stem; her little body is supported by two slender legs, which resemble twigs that can be bent by the slightest breeze; like a flower in the grass, her tiny face peers naïvely out from the mass of black curls, those curls which stream down about her head like a waterfall, covering face, eyes, cheeks, neck and back, so that the little creature hardly knows what to do with them.

She has a patch of linen in her hand, upon which she has been learning how to embroider, and in addition she is holding "the big boy," Izzy Meyer, tightly in her arms. Until "the suckling" had arrived—the child whom mother is now holding—Izzy Meyer had been called "the suckling." After the arrival of the new infant, Izzy Meyer received the name "big boy," and Deborah's arms became his "home." From that time on, he had stubbornly insisted on being with her every minute of the day.

So now Deborah holds "the big boy" in her arms from morning until night, whether she is out on the street playing a game with pebbles during her free time, or whether she is busy learning how to embroider and sew.

"Where do you keep yourself all day? One never gets to see you at all"—is the way her father greets her.

"What do you expect of the child? She is a grown-up girl now, she must think about making her living, and that is why she spends her time with Feigele, and is learning how to sew"—mother defends her daughter.

"Deborah, go, run over to the store! Maybe they will give you a herring on credit; your father would like something salty to eat."

CHAPTER II

America

When Deborah entered the second half of her apprenticeship with the seamstress Feigele, she began to bring home her earnings; they amounted to one or two gulden a week.

Her mother sought out a certain jug, one of her "best friends," upon which she could rely, and every week she faithfully deposited in it the money which Deborah brought home; and as she did so she uttered a thousand binding oaths to the effect that: "and even if I knew that the whole house were to go to wrack and ruin—I would not touch any of the child's hard-earned money. That money must be put aside for the Feast of the Passover; then I am going to buy a new pair of shoes for Deborah and have a new dress made for her. She has never had a decent dress on her back"—her mother added to herself—"never in all her life. The child has never even owned an entirely new dress, everything has been made over, everything patched!"

And really—the jug seemed to be guarded by a magic circle. The mother fought like a lion to keep her child's "blood and sweat" in safety. She permitted neither cold nor hunger to move her to touch Deborah's money; even her Ansel's desire for a bit of herring, which ordinarily moved her heart to pity, could not induce her to approach the pot in which lay Deborah's gulden. Deborah's first earnings were sacred to her. But it is difficult for a poor person to keep vows, and strong as mother's determination might be, even that was surpassed by her distress. In an extraordinary emergency, she crept up to the jug like a thief and "robbed" her child. Still, this had

happened only once, and that was when the teacher had sent little Joine Gedalie home from the elementary Hebrew school, because his tuition had not been paid for three months. The boy wandered about aimlessly, and his mother's heart ached when she saw that her Joine Gedalie was not studying. For the sake of learning, everything is permissible....

But when the time of the Passover arrived, mother drew the jug forth from its hiding-place in a dark corner and took out the silver gulden. Her original idea had been to disregard every other household demand, and to spend all of the money for Deborah. "After all, it is the child's own hard-earned money."

But a mother is always a mother; when the time of the Passover arrived, she thought of the other children; she remembered that Joine Gedalie's breeches had been patched so many times that they had entirely lost their original color, and that the shirt was visible through all the gapes in the patchwork and at the seams; she remembered that he had to go to the synagogue with his father. And besides, how would Ansel appear when he stood at the Ark to conduct the Reading of the Law, and, beside him, Moishele wearing a cap without a visor?

And so every evening mother calculated, planned and calculated some more, but the figures never came out right. The upshot of it all was that "the eldest," the one who sewed shoe-uppers, had to provide the shoes, whether he liked or not. He made an outcry, to be sure, saying that he was being robbed of his last cent and would never be able to go to America; nevertheless, he did have to make four pairs of boots; and those intended for Joine Gedalie and for Deborah were of the very finest leather. Deborah was thus honored because her big brother liked her, and Joine Gedalie because he was his father's favorite son and a scholar. So mother succeeded in extracting the shoes from her eldest son.

With the money which Deborah had earned, she bought calico for a little dress, and material for two pairs of breeches

for the younger boys; she also asked for extra lengths of the same material to use for patching their coats.

Not until the new breeches were made, and the coats mended, did mother notice that the little boys did not have shirts good enough to wear with their new things; and since new caps proved to be necessary as well, mother sat up half the night, mending shirts for the holidays.

Deborah saw her mother sitting in the lamplight late at night, mending shirts; then she could not sleep either, and she arose; the seamstress in her was aroused, and she said:

"Mother, I am going to help you."

"Go to bed, it is late. I can finish this by myself."

"I'm really not sleepy"—quickly Deborah threaded a needle, and took a shirt out of her mother's hand.

"Here, you take Joine Gedalie's shirt, I want to mend father's myself," said mother.

It is late at night. Sleep reigns in the home of Ansel, the Reader of Scriptures. The diverse sounds of night become audible; a cricket chirps behind the stove; the clock with its heavy pendulum ticks loudly. It is late, the darkness of the night finds its way into the room through the slits in the shutters. Upon the white shirts which lie on the little table falls the light of the lamp, whose shade, cut from newspaper, dims rather than accentuates the glow. On the half-darkened walls two shadows are stirring, one large shadow, one small one, and both of them are sewing.

But when the first evening of the Passover finally arrived, Sarah Rifke's eyes lighted up as she saw her children sitting in a row, and one carefully-starched shirt collar after another gleaming in lustrous whiteness. Moishele was wearing a new cap; Joine Gedalie had deliberately tucked up his long coat so that his breeches might show. The new boots creaked, and every one of the boys enjoyed walking back and forth as often as possible so that the creaking of the soles might be heard. And Deborah sat at the table, her hair arranged in two black braids, and her new calico dress brightened by a red ribbon

sash which mother had saved from the days of her girlhood.

On the eve of the First Feast of the Passover, mother's pleasure in the festive appearance of her children was, to be sure, of short duration. She was so fatigued by her preparations for the holidays and the task of putting the children's clothes in order, that she went to sleep at the table. But when she looked down from the women's balcony in the synagogue on the first morning of the Passover, while the Reading of the Law was in progress, and saw her Ansel standing in front of the Scroll of the Law, with Moishele on one side and Joine Gedalie on the other, both wearing new caps, new boots and new breeches (the boys saw to it that every one was able to see the new breeches)—then, for the first time in her life, did Sarah Rifke see her children arrayed so magnificently that no one else could compare with them. And, at that moment, whose pride and joy could have been greater than hers?

The first days of this holiday season were festive and joyful, but the last days were sad. On the first half-holiday, Shloime Chaim, the eldest son, began to make preparations for his departure.

"Father, mother," he announced early in the morning on the first half-holiday, "I am going to America!"

The entire family was aware of the fact that Shloime Chaim had been saving money for a steamship ticket to America, and all of them, including father and mother, were anticipating this event. More than once had Ansel said to his son at the dinner table:

"Well, my son, when are you going to lead us out of exile? When are you going to go to America and then send for the rest of us?"

Ansel sometimes put this question into briefer form, as well:

"Tell me, my son, just when will the Messiah arrive?"

But when anticipation became reality, and Shloime Chaim began to make definite preparations for his journey, one might have thought that a great calamity had come upon the family;

father looked at mother, mother at father; incredulously father began:

"Oh well, the boy is only talking...."

"Father, directly after the holidays I am going to leave for the border at Kohl, on the emigrant wagon"—Shloime Chaim interrupted his father, decisively.

"He wants to go to America! I suppose you think that America is mere child's play? America isn't Tischnowitz. Just see, just see, how every one is going to America these days!" said his father, with forced mockery.

But when the parents saw that their son was serious about this matter, and when he had brought home Schmul, the Singer sewing-machine agent, to discuss the sale of the shoemaker's machine with him, then did his mother's heart grow sad, and his father begin to talk to him gravely:

"Tell me, my son, what are you going to do in America?"

"Work," answered Shloime Chaim.

"You really think that America stands in need of workers such as you? I suppose you think that America has never seen workers as good as you are, don't you?"—again his father resorted to good-natured scorn.

"A worker is highly esteemed in America. He is 'all right'" —Ansel's eldest son made use of the only English words which every emigrant to America learns even before he leaves his own country.

"But not workers like you," his father went on, mockingly.

Mother would not let them sell the machine. The machine had been their only breadwinner up to this time. For even though the eldest son might be miserly, and would give up a groschen only after a good deal of scolding and shouting, nevertheless Shloime Chaim had been, in his mother's opinion, their only source of income. When food was lacking, and father brought home nothing but "a goat" or "a seat in the synagogue," then the eldest son was forced to make a contribution, whether he liked to do it or not. And his mother was convinced that it all came from the machine.

"What are you doing with the machine? You are taking the bread right out of our mouths," said mother, and turned to her son in tears.

"What will you do with the machine? What will you use it for?".

"What will I use it for? What do you mean by that? Why, it is my one and only breadwinner, isn't it?"—mother embraced the machine as though she wanted to protect this only breadwinner. "When there is a machine in the house, there's always a groschen coming in, too."

"And who is going to sew on it?"

"Who, who?"—mother became pensive. "There will certainly be some one who will sew on it"—mother was vaguely afraid to complete the thought; but all of them knew who would sew on the machine.

When father finally realized that his son was in earnest about the proposed departure, he changed his tactics. Instead of making fun of him, he began to speak seriously, and gave his eldest son instructions as to how to deport himself out in the world:

"Don't think for a moment that America is a mere nothing. One gets to America by crossing a big sea, by crossing the ocean. Germany is no small matter either, do you understand? You will have to travel through distant countries, my son. And when you have finally crossed the ocean, when you have reached America, when you are right there..."

Ansel regarded himself as a man of the world. In his youth he had had some slight contact with the "movement of enlightenment," and had read secular Hebrew books. Even now he occasionally liked to look over the daily Hebrew paper, the *Hezefira*, to which the Hebrew teacher of the little village subscribed.

Ansel regarded himself as a man of experience in all worldly affairs, and began to describe the entire journey to America for his son's benefit—the borders, the towns through which he

would travel, the ships on the ocean, yes, even America itself —just as though he had been there himself.

"Most important of all; don't talk to any one! And when you have crossed the border don't hurry, just walk along casually, so that no one will notice that you are a stranger! And when you see a German, say to him, 'Good morning, sir!' The Germans are fine people. And if you say 'Good morning' to any one, he won't ask to see your passport, or for any other identification.

"On the day you board the ship, don't eat anything except a lemon—nothing else. And when, with God's help, you reach America (yes, to be sure, it may be that, God forbid, there will be a storm on the ocean; in which case don't look at the sea at all, but lie down on your stomach, bury your face in the pillow, and say a chapter of Psalms; and every day while you are on the ship, read aloud the book of the Prophet Jonah); and if, with God's help, you do get across the big sea and over to America, and the Americans ask you: 'Why did you come to America?' just answer: 'I came to earn my living by working.' Tell them also: 'I have a letter to an uncle.' Then they won't harm you in any way. The Americans are fine people, and wealthy. When a stranger comes to their country, especially if he is a Jew, they receive him with open arms. . . ."

While Ansel was giving his son these instructions, the other children stood about in a circle with mouths and eyes wide open, amazed at the strange things to which father referred. They were actually afraid of Shloime Chaim, as though the great storms of the terrible sea, which he was about to cross, were even now lurking in his coat.

And father sat down, called for a sheet of paper and a new pen, moistened the pen with his lips, plunged it slowly into the ink, and began to inscribe a Hebrew capital "L," the initial letter of the word *Lekowed* (the honorable), as the beginning of an epistle to Uncle Pinchas in America.

Father sweated copiously over this letter, and every one in

the house had to go about on tiptoe for several hours. All the elegant phrases which father remembered from the era of enlightenment in the days of his youth, he put down in the letter to Uncle Pinchas in America. It was written in so remarkable a jumble of Hebrew and Yiddish that it would have required another Reader of Scripture to understand all the metaphors and riddles which it contained. But when the letter was finally finished, and the address was to be written, it was discovered that father did not know the address of Uncle Pinchas in America.

Ansel ransacked all the bureau drawers, looked through old letters and papers, and found all kinds of things in them, even his marriage contract with mother; but the address of Uncle Pinchas could not be found. But the letter had already been written, and father could not bear to have his elaborate calligraphy go to waste; so he wrote on the envelope in everyday Yiddish: "To Uncle Pinchas in America," and turned it over to his son with the admonition: "When you are in New York, just ask where Uncle Pinchas lives, they'll be able to tell you, I know. For New York and America are the same thing."

Sarah Rifke gave her son no advice, nor did she present him with a letter to any uncle. Such matters were beyond her ken. But to make up for this she sat up night after night with Deborah and mended all of her eldest son's shirts and socks; and every shirt which she placed into his box was accompanied by a murmured blessing and dampened with tears....

On the day after the Feast of the Passover, father folded the letter for Uncle Pinchas into the little purse which Deborah had made for her brother, and hung it round his neck. He also gave him a pair of new phylacteries and a prayer book, and had him take an oath upon it never to forswear his Judaism. His mother washed out her son's prayer shawl for the last time, the linen one with the fringes, and placed it round his shoulders; she made him promise to wear it during the entire journey, for if he did so, no harm could come to him. She also put a bit of bread and a little salt, wrapped in a piece of

paper, into his pocket; that was to ward off the Evil Eye. Shloime Chaim took his little box, and his parents accompanied him to the emigrant wagon. When the wagon arrived, which was to take the travelers as far as Kohl, the leave-taking began.

His mother never said one word during all this time; but when her son gave her a farewell kiss and said: "Keep well, mother"—a loud sobbing arose to her lips:

"My child—don't forget me, my child!"

"Don't worry about that, mother"—the wagon bore Shloime Chaim out into the dark night....

CHAPTER III

A New Breadwinner

After the eldest son had gone away, mother felt as though her right arm had been cut off. Not until now did it become clear how right Sarah Rifke had been in her evaluation of the machine. Despite his stinginess, the eldest son had nevertheless been forced to help out his mother whether he liked to or not; sometimes contributing one gulden, sometimes two; at any rate, there had always been a groschen in the house.

But now mother did not know what to do; when money for bread was lacking there was no one to whom to turn. The machine had remained in the house, to be sure; but there was no one who could sew on it. And so one evening, when father and mother were sitting at the table after supper and discussing their finances, mother lamented:

"As long as the eldest boy was at home, I did get to see a groschen now and then, no matter how hard times might be. There was always a little money coming in anyhow. But now matters are in a terrible state."

Father said: "But you have a machine in the house, haven't you?"

"Can I eat a machine?" asked mother.

"Deborah is—heaven keep her—a grown-up girl now, why should she be working for strangers, wearing herself out for one or two gulden a week?"

"Are you going to start in talking about Deborah again? You keep on talking about Deborah as though there were nobody else in the world."

"Just the same, what I say is true—why shouldn't Deborah

open up her own dressmaking establishment instead of working for others?"

"I will not permit the child to be put into harness so young. I know that when I once harness her to the machine she will stay there forever."

"Well, what is she doing now—dancing perhaps?"

"But, after all, she is still a mere child!"

There was no help for it. Mother herself called in Schmul, the agent for Singer machines, and exchanged the shoemaker's machine for a regular sewing machine; payments of a ruble a week were agreed upon to make up the difference in price. The contract with Feigele, the seamstress, was broken, and Deborah was taken out of the work shop in the middle of her apprentice year.

"I know, my child," said mother to Deborah when she sat down to her machine at home; "I know that I am yoking you like an ox to a plow. But is there any other way out?"

Deborah did not understand why her mother lamented so; on the contrary, she considered herself quite grown-up, now that she had begun to work independently, and was proud of herself.

"Mother, it is better for me to be my own master than to be merely a servant for some one else. Is there any other way out for you, mother? What can you do about it?" and with that she folded her young arms just as her mother did.

"You are a girl, you know; it is much more important for you to look after your own future," replied her mother.

Deborah considered this for a moment. At first she did not understand what her mother meant, then her lean cheeks beneath the black curly hair flushed.

"There's still time to look after my future...."

From the very beginning, ever since Deborah had been a mere child, her mother had shared her troubles with her daughter. She had no one else to whom she could pour out her heart completely, no one else with whom to discuss her trials and tribulations and to whom she could go for advice.

She could not talk to father about these matters; first of all, because father was always occupied with a thousand plans of his own. Every day he returned home from the market place with a new plan; when soda water began to be popular he tried to establish a soda-water factory; at another time he had gone so far as to find a partner with whom he was going to rent a windmill; but each time the fulfillment of his plans was frustrated by "a hair's-breadth." As a third venture he had actually purchased a lottery business; this time, too, he came within "a hair's-breadth" of success. Moreover, father was constantly occupied with community affairs. With the exception of Ansel, nobody in town bothered about community affairs, and nobody except Ansel was at all concerned as to whether the new kosher butcher was a "Pilgrim" or an opponent of the "Pilgrims," namely, a *Misnagid;* whether the cantor was a Lithuanian; whether the Rabbi looked after his students or took a nap in the afternoon. And, most important of all, Ansel was, of course, the Reader of Scripture, and that constituted mother's greatest source of happiness. And besides, father always raised objections to everything; if he could think of none at the time, he postponed the matters which mother brought him for advisement, until such time as his own pleasant plans might be fulfilled. "Just let me work out my plan, then you'll have everything that you need for the Sabbath, you'll have plenty of wood for winter—nothing will be lacking."

Since mother needed practical advice, however, instead of fanciful dreams, she turned to Deborah in all her difficulties, and so it had been since the girl was very young.

Sarah Rifke knew that she was not doing right by her daughter, and more than once, when her troubles kept her awake at night, Deborah was one of her chief concerns:

"What do I expect of the child? Why do I force her to share my unhappiness?" But Deborah was the only person in the house to whom mother could talk about these things.

Now, however, Deborah had become the bread-winner, and

this in itself was reason enough why she should be regarded as her mother's adviser. Deborah's mother consulted her daughter about everything that concerned the household.

"Whatever shall we do about Joine Gedalie, my child? His teacher has sent him home from school again."

Deborah put down her sewing, crossed her arms just as her mother did, and pondered for a while before she answered:

"Maybe you had better take two gulden out of the jug and send them to the teacher as part payment?"

"But if we do that, how are we to buy new clothes for father to wear during the holidays? Why, that is what I am saving for, to get a new suit for father, at least. I should certainly blush for shame, if I were to see him walk up to the rostrum in the synagogue, wearing his tattered everyday caftan on the Sabbath day or during the holidays."

"I'll soon be finished with these shirts for Leah, then you'll have money, and you can put back the two gulden."

A new source of income opened up for mother very soon, however, and one which was entirely unexpected.

Moishele, "the Ox," who had been going to school until a short time before, began to earn money, and to bring some of it home. This was so unexpected that his mother could scarcely believe it.

Moishele was two years younger than Deborah. The child born between Deborah and Moishele had died as an infant; probably he had not liked the home with Ansel to which the Lord had allotted him, and he had returned to his Heavenly Father. And so the nickname "Ox" had been bestowed upon Moishele by his father, because nothing could persuade the boy to study. Neither beatings nor scoldings helped in his case; Moishele was a "stupid ox," and understood nothing which the teacher said. But Moishele "the Ox" was a business man, even while he was still attending school. He was constantly buying or selling something.

He made all his investments in a business-like manner. He bought a pen-knife for twenty kopeks and raffled it off by

selling a hundred numbers at one kopek a piece. Then he raffled off a purse or a pair of gloves.

When he was a little older, he bought tobacco and tobacco papers, rolled cigarettes and sold them. For the Feast of Purim he organized a troupe of actors, with whom he staged performances during the evening at various homes. Before the Passover he carried the crumbs of unleavened bread out of the houses for two kopeks, and had it burned. At Pentecost he went to the river bank, cut willow reeds, and took them to town for sale. As the Feast of the Tabernacle approached, he dealt in foliage and willow branches.

He carried on seasonal occupations, so to speak. During the summer he stood guard over the clothing of the sons of wealthy citizens when they went to the river to bathe; in the winter he sold paper lanterns which he made himself.

Until he was thirteen years old, Moishele was afraid of his father, and went to school, as was proper, to carry on his studies. But, as soon as he was confirmed, the thirteen-year-old boy regarded himself as being grown-up, and declared his independence to his father's face in a most revolutionary manner, and then refused to attend school any longer.

Since that time Moishele spent his days either in the market place, or in the confectionery store where the Polish landowners usually assembled when they came to town. There he engaged in the same activities as the other "dealers" who were there. When a peasant arrived, Moishele was the first one to jump on his wagon, where he rummaged about in the straw and discovered for himself what the peasant had brought to town to sell. If it turned out to be eggs, he was at the egg-dealer's in a trice; if grain, at the grain-dealer's. He gave them information as to what had arrived in town, and received a small commission for his services.

When he had saved up a few gulden, he began to do a little business at the market-place for himself; sometimes he bought eggs, sometimes butter, sometimes a chicken.

But Moishele soon advanced in his business career and began

to make "real deals." He put up a stand made of boards, and at every weekly-market he sold something different; now ribbon remnants, now "seconds" of lengths of fabrics—in short, Moishele dealt in all manner of merchandise; whether dry goods or grains was all the same to him. And before long Moishele was bringing in more than half the revenue for the upkeep of the household, and in town he was rated as a merchant.

When Father Ansel, who regarded himself as an unsurpassed merchant—nothing was lacking except "luck"—saw how his son was earning money and was outstripping him, he was not able to comprehend it.

"Just look at your merchants! Just see who is in business these days!" says father, as the family sits at the supper table. "That is the world of today,"—and as he speaks he points to the red-haired boy with the freckled face who is sitting next to his mother, under her protecting wing, as it were.

"What about it? Very well, then, he isn't a merchant," says mother, "and certainly it is better not to be a merchant, and to earn money, than to be a merchant and not earn anything."

Father puts down his spoon and pushes back his plate:

"What did you say?"

Mother is sorry immediately to have thus mortified her Ansel; it makes her unhappy, and she wants to rectify it again, but she does not know how to do this and is silent.

"So! You think he is a better merchant than I am, because he earns money, and I don't; that is what you mean to say, isn't it?" says father, interpreting mother's words.

"But, for Heaven's sake, whoever was comparing you with him? You are a scholar—and what is he? A stupid boy."

And with a sigh mother ladles out another spoonful of soup for Moishele.

"Of course I should like it much better if you went to the school instead of trying to please me with a fortune."

Mollified, father pulls his plate toward him again.

"But you, my child," says mother to Joine Gedalie, who has a good head on his shoulders and studies hard (and, as she speaks she puts a bit of soup meat on his plate) "you, my child, see to it that you follow in your father's footsteps, rather than in your brother's."

CHAPTER IV

A Letter from America

THEN, however, came the "stroke of good luck."

The eldest son sent a letter from America, which also contained a welcome "insert."

"Dear father and dear mother, I have survived the journey across the terrible sea, and arrived safely in America. Everything which you, dear father, told me about the ocean, is as nothing compared to the real ocean. For fourteen days I, with all the others, almost suffocated in a cellar, buried my face in a blanket, and did not know whether I was dead or alive. After I had crossed the frontier—the driver Chaim led us over during the night—they took me and all the others and locked us into a railroad car; then they transported us to the ship just as though we had been convicts; so I could not get out at any station to take a look at any German as you told me to."

Father was amazed to learn that the Germans would do anything like that. Because the Germans are, of course, fine people. ... For that reason he put all the blame on his son. "Of course, when they see a poor devil like him. I'd like to see whether they would lock me up in a railroad car were I to take the journey!"

After the first letter there was a silence of months. The eldest son sent no further message. Sarah Rifke thought that her son—may heaven forbid—was lost. She spent sleepless nights. One more worry was added to her heavy burden of grief.

"Ansel," she sobbed at night in her bed—"whatever has become of the boy? My heart is filled with forebodings. How

could we take a child of ours and send him away across the sea? Ansel, I am afraid the boy is lost way out there among strangers."

"He is probably squandering his money to the very last groschen. He was always a scoundrel, and he will continue to be a scoundrel," the father prophesied.

Month after month went by. Before the Feast of the Passover (it was always a festival of good fortune in Ansel's family; all the miracles in Ansel's family occurred during this season), a letter arrived from America; in it there was a photograph of the boy and a money order for twenty rubles. Sarah Rifke studied the photograph, and could not believe her eyes.

"That is my son?" she asked.

In the photograph he was actually wearing a suit with a short jacket, and across the front of his vest he had a gold chain.

"If he has a gold chain, he must have a gold watch too," remarked Ansel, delivering himself of a daring conclusion. "Who would wear a chain without a watch?"

In the photograph Shloime Chaim stood in front of a large vase, and beside him was a little table with a fine tea service.

"He isn't wearing a hat," said his mother.

But the letter read: "Dear mother, do not think that I have forgotten you. Just as a mother cannot forget her child, so a child cannot forget the mother who bore him," and here Sarah Rifke began to cry, to cry as hard as she cried at the reading of the Book of Lamentations during the Memorial Fast of the Destruction of the Holy Temple. Ansel tried in every way possible to quiet her, even by shouting at her:

"Let me read, for Heaven's sake, you can cry later on."

He went on: "I did not write to you because I had nothing to say. I have gone through a lot in America. If all the water in the sea were turned into ink, the trees in the forest into pens, and the dome of the sky into paper, yet they would not suffice to record all that I have suffered and experienced in America...."

"Of course, when one takes one's own child and sends him away to the ends of the earth"—again Sarah Rifke broke out into unappeasable sobbing.

"Do finally stop that crying, and let me read," shouted Ansel frantically.

"But Heaven be thanked, all of that is in the past, and now I can write in happier mood. I did not write sooner, because I did not want to send you mere words and nothing more—" (here there followed a whole line of dash-marks, at which Ansel interrupted himself).

"Do you understand what he means?" asked Ansel. "He did not want to send mere words; well said; Sarah, America is making a man out of our son."

"And now, dear father, I want to write you about everything which I have experienced. At first, when I arrived in America, I asked about Uncle Pinchas to whom you gave me a letter; no one knows who Uncle Pinchas is. I went to our own countrymen, and I spent many days and weeks in looking for an Uncle Pinchas, but no one knows who he is. It would have been better if you had not given me the letter to Uncle Pinchas, for then I would have been spared weeks of searching and worry, I should have lost no time, and would have gone to work immediately."

"That is what happens when one sends a fool to market," father interpolates.

The rest of the letter revealed that he had lived for a week at the home of one of his countrymen, and a second week at the home of another. A third countryman had taken him to a factory which made leather goods. Now he was living at a private home, paying a dollar a week for his "bit of lodging," though he was at home only during the night.

"Do you understand, Sarah—two rubles a week for nothing but a bed in which to sleep. You must know, of course, that one ruble in America has as much value as two rubles over here," Ansel explained to his wife.

"Probably he can't manage any other way, the poor thing," said mother in defense of her son's extravagance.

But the son comforted his parents by saying that, Heaven be praised, he was even now earning good money. He promised his mother: "Do not be afraid mother, I shall not forget you. I think of you day and night."

"May God keep him and protect him for those words!"

"I am thinking of your welfare"—the letter went on—"and most of all, of Deborah. Why should she be sitting at home? Here the girls earn good money and make their fortune; a girl like Deborah can make her fortune here. Here a girl needs no dowry. Here you will find a topsy-turvy world—the bridegroom has to provide the dowry, and not the bride. And it is very easy to make a good match here, because girls from the old country are in great demand—the American girls, you must know, are bold and brazen."

Ansel stopped reading for a moment, to catch his breath.

"See, didn't I always say, what are we staying here for, tell me? There is an America waiting for us somewhere in the world, and here we stay."

"Do read on!" urged Sarah Rifke, all impatience now.

"The boys could also do well here. Here the children earn money too, and bring home their earnings. Father can earn money too, there is a great scarcity of Readers of Scripture. No one here can conduct the reading of the Thora properly. And so, dear mother"—the letter ended—"don't worry, God will help us, and we shall all be happily united again. You will not have to work so hard, nor need to worry about us. Here the children work for their mother. You will sit in an easy chair in the 'parloor,' and the children will work for you, not you for the children."

Sarah Rifke had never known that she worked hard. She had never known that worry was wearing her down. For whom had she endured all this? For her children! If she does work hard, well, it is for her own children, isn't it? ... and now her own child is telling her this, and is comforting her.

"My child, may God console you as you have consoled me with your kind words"—Sarah Rifke insisted that Ansel must include this sentence as a personal message from her, when he wrote to his son. But at first Ansel protested, reproaching her by saying that she would be laughed at in America because she talked "like a woman." But Sarah Rifke would not yield, and Ansel had to incorporate the sentence in the letter.

One can easily imagine what an upheaval this letter caused in Ansel's family. The money alone, which the "eldest" had sent, set the whole town agog. Every one spoke of the good fortune which had befallen Ansel. And Ansel, too, regarded himself as a lucky man.

He talked of nothing else but of "his America." In the synagogue he described America to his cronies in detail, as though he had been there himself and had seen everything.

"We in America"—was his usual manner of speaking—"manage those matters quite differently." He intimated that he was, so to speak, merely a temporary guest in the little village. And, when any one questioned him about some community affair, or told him that the "Pilgrims" had hired their own butcher, he answered: "What concern is that of mine? I don't belong here any more. I have already started on my journey to America...."

For this year's Feast of the Passover, Sarah Rifke not only decked out the children from head to foot in new clothes, not only ordered a new suit for her Ansel, but actually indulged in the luxury of buying a new marriage-wig and a new pair of shoes for herself—for the first time since her wedding. To her neighbors in the synagogue she remarked:

"Since my husband is not able to buy new shoes for me, God has sent me a son for that purpose. While my son was at home he made my shoes for me, now that he is in America, he sends me shoes from over there."

During this Passover service the congregation of the little synagogue listened to an entirely new kind of reading of the Thora. Never had Ansel's voice sounded so clear at a Thora-

reading as it did this time. He trilled like a bird, lingered over every coloratura phrase, and sang every word of the Thora in such a fashion that Sarah Rifke, sitting upstairs in the woman's balcony, felt her cheeks glow with pride. For the first time in her life her eyes gleamed with joy, her forehead shone beneath the new marriage-wig, as she heard the sweet voice of her Ansel. Tears came to her eyes. Piously she asked herself: "God, what have I done to deserve all this?" She believed herself to be the happiest mother in the world, and all the other women envied her.

Henoch

When Deborah became an independent worker with her own dressmaking establishment, she began to make the acquaintance of other young people who were also workers. One of them —his name was Henoch—she preferred to all the others.

Because Deborah attached herself closely to him, and because he had so great an influence on her character—as the future proved—we shall tell about him in detail, although this incident really does not further our story.

While Henoch was still a boy, he slept in the same bed with his mother. His two younger brothers also occupied the same bed. It was a cold winter's night, there was little bed-covering in the house, and for that reason all the children snuggled into bed with their mother; and all of their discarded clothing and torn bed-covers lay upon the bed. But all the discarded clothing and torn bed-covers put together did not give off as much warmth as did father's fur coat. Father owned a fur coat which he had received as a wedding present from mother. Father Gedalie was a scholar, renowned even as a youth for his sagacity. The nap of the fur coat was already worn off, and the collar, which had at one time gleamed lustrously, and had encircled his neck like a living animal, was dull now, extinguished and colorless; but when the fur coat was placed upon the bed, a glorious warmth radiated from it, and enveloped the entire little brood which, huddled together, lay beneath it. When it was removed from the bed, it was as though their one protector had been taken from them; the boys felt as though they were lying stark naked and uncovered

in the street. The fur coat seemed to be a symbol of father's protection.

Father himself sat at the table during the dark winter mornings, and studied the Talmud in the lamplight. His large shadow lay on the wall and filled up half the room. His voice was sad, monotonous, and sounded as though it came from far away. It was cold in the room. The night, which, during the winter months, extended far into the morning hours, tried to enter the room through the window panes, but it could not do so, for the panes were heavily coated with solid frost flowers. And father, dressed in his light, torn, summer caftan, is sitting huddled over the Talmud, rocking forward and backward like a pendulum. Back and forth in the same rhythm rocks the shadow on the wall. Mother knows that father is studying in the cold room instead of going to the house of prayer which is heated, because he does not want to take the fur coat off her bed. Several times she has tried to send father away, has thrown the fur coat off the bed, and said, "Why do you sit in this cold room? You know that it is warm in the synagogue."

Father does not answer. Chassid Gedalie is a taciturn man; he never utters an unnecessary word. So he doesn't answer his wife, but goes on studying, just as though he were not sitting here in the cold room, during these hard times, but basking in the sun of those tropical lands in which his spirit is now tarrying.

Little Henoch is lying under the fur coat with his mother, and looks at his father with black, sparkling child-eyes. He sees the shadow on the wall more clearly than he does his father himself. His father's shadow casts a feeling of seriousness and responsibility upon the boy. The whole room is filled with the words of the sacred gospel which father is studying. The cold flees from the humble bed in which the poor children are lying. To lie in bed in this half-dark, in this shadowy lamplight, seems like lying under a gigantic mountain of human heads.... Every broken chair comes alive. Every pair

of breeches hanging on a chair, every little dress, every shoe, every cooking-pot, every footstool, becomes a living thing, transforms itself into a wild horse, into a cow, a wild animal or a bird. Everything is alive, has a soul. Restless souls they are, who have come to hear father's voice recite the Thora, and to be saved by it, and to be raised to a higher level....

"And I am lying here with mother....I, a great boy of ten, who is already studying the Talmud, whom every one praises as having a good head on his shoulders—I am lying here with my mother as though I were a mere girl."

Quickly the ten-year-old boy sits up in his mother's bed, and, in order that he may conquer, with mortification of the flesh, the evil spirit which tempts him to stay in bed, thrusts his naked feet out into the cold; then he jumps out of bed, quickly slips into his torn breeches and his mended shirt, and puts on his fringed prayer shawl. Worried, his mother calls out: "Henoch, you will take cold—what are you doing, Henoch?"

Like his father, Henoch gives no answer; he merely mutters something to himself. Even his father interrupts his studies for a moment, and says, half to himself: "It is early, go back to bed. The water in the jug is frozen."

But Henoch does not answer his father directly either: "I don't want to sleep."

He goes to the water jug. The water in it is frozen, and he cannot wash his fingernails. Then he remembers what his father always does. He takes the chopping knife, chops off a piece of ice, takes hold of it and tosses it quickly from one hand to the other. It burns like a fiery coal, scalds the skin under his nails like boiling water. But Henoch holds it tightly, and rubs it between his palms.

"Gedalie, do see what the boy is doing!"—calls his mother from the bed.

Gedalie knows what the boy is doing, and says nothing; for what the boy is doing is exactly what he should be doing.

A few minutes later two shadows move to and fro upon the

wall; one, tall and broad, with a long beard and long thick eyebrows, rocks rhythmically, slowly, deliberately as the pendulum of a clock; the other, younger, impetuous as a fountain, rocks rapidly back and forth. And two voices resound: one of them seriously, sadly, like a distant echo, the other, restless, impatient, young....

Until he was fourteen Henoch was very religious. He had inherited his father's unostentatious piety, which enfolded his gentle spirit like a cloak. A quiet prayer seemed constantly to be emanating from his very being. From his earliest childhood onward, Henoch's mind was filled with religious visions with which he had become acquainted through the Bible. They excited his fancy, and he lived according to the teachings of the Bible. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and his brethren, Moses and all the other heroes of the Bible were for him real, living people. He identified himself more closely with their lives than with the everyday, poverty-stricken life at home. His child-like soul was filled with yearning for the sacred places and the sanctified life portrayed in the Bible. He believed in the Messiah and the redemption of the world with all the eager fervency of his young soul, and daily awaited that other life, which he knew must come, in exactly the same way as one anticipates a commonplace reality, and not as one hopes vaguely for the fulfillment of fantastic dreams—just as, for instance, he looked forward, during the long hard winter, to the advent of the joyous, sunny, fair Feast of the Passover....

Even as a child Henoch would creep away by himself in the synagogue, so that he might pray in seclusion where no one could see him. When he came to those passages in the prayers which refer to Jerusalem, to the Temple or to the Messiah, he often wept, and, with all the naïveté of his child-heart, he implored God to take pity on the world at last, and to send the Messiah immediately. Those passages of the liturgy in which the Messiah is mentioned, were, for the boy, the most sacred, the most intimate, and the most important of all,

and he lingered over them longer than over the other prayers.

This deep religious instinct Henoch had inherited from his father; it made an indelible impression on his spirit and character. Henoch's father was a taciturn man. No superfluous word fell from his lips. You could actually count the words he spoke; you might tell him the most terrible things; his own home might be the scene of some extraordinary event, either happy or tragic—he was never astonished, he never gave expression to joy or grief; he did not seem to react to external circumstances at all. If one of the children was ill, he stayed up night after night and sat with a book at the child's bedside, waiting on him silently. He never went to sleep until all the children were in bed, and then he always covered them with old clothes and with his own fur coat. During the cold winter nights he arose while it was still dark as pitch and studied quietly, so that he might not awaken the children. Never did he leave the house in the morning without making a fire in the little stove, before the mother and the children were awake.

Remarkable in this man was his deep and silent devotion to his wife. She was the breadwinner, and the practical one of the two, while he was concerned only with supermundane affairs; nevertheless, he would never permit his wife to carry her heavy packages or the boards for her booth. All of this he did himself. It cut Feiga to the heart, when she saw her Gedalie performing such menial tasks. But she could not persuade him to do otherwise; Gedalie carried the packages like a common person, and on the evenings of market-days he even missed the services at the synagogue, and ran to the market-place in order to bring home Feiga's wares and the boards for her booth.

When Feiga came home tired and worn out after the day at the market, she found the table set, a fire in the stove, and a kettle of hot water on the hearth. She was thoroughly ashamed to think that Gedalie occupied himself with such matters, and reproached him with tender words. "Who ever

heard of such a thing, a man occupying himself with such matters?"

While the children were still young, Gedalie sat at their cradle half the night, and put them to sleep so that Feiga might not have her slumber disturbed. And even now he cannot sleep if he hears his wife complain that she has a sideache, or that her hands and face are burned by the hot sun to which she has been exposed all day. Softly, so that no one may hear him, he chops a little wood, and prepares a glass of tea. He brings it to his wife's bedside without a word.

When Feiga sees the glass of tea, she feels sorry for her husband, sorry to think that she has kept him awake. She grits her teeth to suppress the pain, and does not moan any more.

Never was there a loud word, and certainly never an angry one spoken in this house. Between husband and wife there prevailed a deep, pure love, which reverberated like a song without words through their modest humble life. No word of this was ever spoken between man and wife, but each was aware of the other as though they were indeed one body and one soul. To these emotions Feiga gave voice only occasionally, in the form of tender reproach. When she saw how her Gedalie occupied himself with matters which were unworthy of a man, that hurt her; but at the same time it made her happy to see that her Gedalie was worried about her, and then she gave utterance to these mingled emotions in words of tender reproach: "Could any one believe that a man would spend his time like that?"

And in Gedalie's case the emotion expressed itself only through the medium of a quiet glance which he stealthily cast in his wife's direction.

This tranquil, pure feeling of love which prevailed between man and wife was reflected throughout the entire household. With unparalleled tenderness the children were attached to their parents and to one another.

The life which his parents led exercised a deep influence on

little Henoch, and left ineradicable traces on his character and on his destiny.

Gedalie belonged to the followers of the Miracle-rabbi of Kalwarya Gora. Once a year, at the time of the Feast of the Tabernacle, Gedalie made a pilgrimage to the Rabbi. When Henoch was twelve years old, his father took him along, so that he might see the Rabbi before he was confirmed. The Rabbi, his little court, the festive spirit—all these made a tremendous impression on the twelve-year-old boy. It was not the Rabbi himself, nor the meals shared with him, nor the fervor of the Pilgrims which stirred his emotions so deeply; it was something else—the unity, the coming together of so many Jews in one place, the pull of a common interest which bound them to one another. Henoch and his father were lodged in the same inn with hundreds of other "Pilgrims." All of them slept together, three or four in one bed, on the tables, on the benches. Always they ate together. There was no distinction between "mine" and "thine," everything was common property. Rich and poor "Pilgrims" were closely united. All called one another by the familiar "thou."

At the court of the Rabbi, at prayers or at meals, all of them, without exception, came together, sang together, put their hands on one another's shoulders, took hold of one another's arms, and aspired toward the man, who, covering his face with his hands, sat at the table and sighed. When his meal was brought to him in a massive dish, he took a bit of fish or meat in his hand and tasted it. All the rest of it he pushed toward the "Pilgrims"; and they fought for his plate, and every one wanted to taste of the food which the Rabbi had touched.

When the Rabbi began to expound the Thora, his thousands of listeners became as *one* person, as *one* body; they leaned forward in order to hear what the Rabbi said. And when one of them began a song at table, all joined in and sang together; if some one began to dance, all took hold of one another, the poor man clasped the hand of his rich neighbor, and they

crowded close together in the round dance, taking hold of one another's caftans, hands or shoulders, and dancing together.

To Henoch it seems as though these grown-up fathers, these worried, harried, industrious Jews had become children again. The whole world was set free.

"That's the way it will be when the Messiah comes," thought the boy, "but then it will include all the Jews in the whole world, and not only the Jews, but all the people in the whole world will be like this, will lodge in one inn, will eat together, will be happy together, will sing and dance together. The Messiah will be a Rabbi, and all the people in the whole world will be 'Pilgrims'—all the people in the whole world. Not the Gentiles, of course—the Gentiles will die, will perish —when that time comes there will be no one but Jews in the whole world."

And with the full measure of his spiritual enthusiasm, with the intense religious instincts of a naïve boy, Henoch undertook to bring the time for the arrival of the Messiah nearer. He fasted for half-days at a time, prayed a great deal and ardently, never slurred over as much as one word of his prayers, and believed that every day which went by brought redemption so much the nearer. "He comes, he comes, the Messiah comes...."

Until one day, when this whole world of his crashed down in ruins about him, and every hope vanished, and every vestige of faith.

This all began with various questions which had disturbed him since he was a child. At first he was afraid to face them, and tried to answer them with the traditional explanations.

The first question of every devout boy: "Why is there good and evil?" was answered for him; every itinerant preacher who came to the city preached about this, every tract tried to explain it by saying that God had given man free will.

But following this question Henoch came to a more difficult one, about which he had been afraid to think up to this time:

"Why did God create Gentiles and Jews? Why did He

permit different religions to exist? If He is omnipotent, why does He not order matters so that every one will believe in him? But if He does not do that, why are the Gentiles to blame that they are Gentiles? Why have they been doomed to destruction?"

Then came the basic question which he did not dare to face at all: "Who will prove to me that the Jews are right in their claim that they alone worship the true God? Obviously there are more Gentiles than Jews; the whole world consists of Gentiles, and there are so few Jews—who can prove to me that the Jews are the only ones who know the true path?"

Then came the thought: "Why pray? Why does God require my good deeds? What good does it do Him if I praise Him?"

The first test consisted of Henoch's neglecting to say his prayers—and nothing happened, the world did not come to an end, he himself did not die....

He had no one with whom he could discuss this. He was not accustomed to discussing such matters with his father. His father constantly kept his own counsel. Several times Henoch tried to put a question to him, but his father answered briefly: "One must have faith...."

"But what does one do if one does not have faith?"

Father said, "Then he is a cripple. God have pity on him!"

When Henoch put a similar question to his teacher, he had his ears boxed, and the teacher said, "Nothing good will ever come of you, that is certain." A young man who took lessons with him in the synagogue answered his questions by saying, "One must read the sermons, that is all."

Henoch read the sermons. They really did make an attempt to answer all questions, but the questions returned.

For a long time Henoch lived in a world of chaos. Those were years of torture. His child-world had crashed down about his ears, and he had no other. He sought forgetfulness in prayer. But prayer was no longer a prayer, and studying was no longer studying. Perhaps he might still have saved himself

from the sea of doubt into which he had fallen, but a youth in the synagogue, who was about the same age as Henoch, secretly slipped him secular books printed in Hebrew, and these increased his doubts still more, and robbed him of the last vestige of faith which still remained in him.

Henoch went about helplessly; for there was no one to take him by the hand and to point out the right path. Occasionally he came upon some book which threw a dim light upon some new path; but it vanished soon, and the way was as dark as before.

He went to the house of prayer as a matter of habit—he studied and prayed, because he had nothing else to do. But his heart was not in it, life seemed to him to have no meaning. "How can one live without a Messiah?"

His father must certainly have noticed something, but, true to his custom, he said nothing. Nevertheless it was quite plain that he noticed something, for one evening he said, apparently without premeditation: "How can one live without a goal?"

But where to find a goal? And where is the path that leads to the goal? Henoch had sought it constantly from the day on which he had lost his first goal.

He spent the long summer days in the little woods near the cemetery and read. In the winter he sat in the woman's balcony of the synagogue or at the home of the elementary-school teacher and studied Russian grammar, and later on he spent his time at the home of a student from Lithuania who gave lessons. He read the Hebrew books of the liberals, Smolenski and Mapu, sometimes he even dared to tackle a Russian book. "Is it perhaps my fault that I cannot find the 'goal'? But it must certainly be somewhere, or else the world would have no purpose."

One day a young man came to town; he remained there for only a few days and came to the synagogue too. There he entered into conversation with the young men. Afterwards he took Henoch for a walk into the woods, and there he told him about life in the great cities. He spoke of true justice and

humanity, and said that everything depended upon one's own strength, all that was necessary was the will to succeed. Instead of saying any more, he left several books with Henoch; these were written in everyday Yiddish. These books brought about a revolution in Henoch's philosophy. What he found there he had often surmised, and yet he had not surmised it. And still it was so obvious....

Two of these books were poems by Perez: "The Straimel," and "Boncie, the Silent One."

The "Straimel" destroyed, as with glowing irons, his last glimmering of faith in the *straimel*, the fur-edged Sabbath hat of the Rabbi, and also in the power of this hat, and left an open wound in Henoch's heart.... And "Boncie, the Silent One," gave root to something new in this open wound, which caused it to heal up again—the feeling of justice for the suppressed.

Henoch was seventeen years old; he had already destroyed one world and was building a new one.

Henoch became a laborer; he apprenticed himself to the printer Getzl. There he earned twenty-five rubles for a three-months' season. At home it was regarded as a calamity that Henoch had given up his studies. His father was silent as was his wont. But worse than his silence was the fact that he took no notice of his son. He lived in the same room with him, he ate at the same table with him, but he no longer saw him. His father knew how to arrange matters so that, if he wished, he could overlook a person entirely. He did not ask Henoch about his work, and he addressed no remarks to him; it was just as though he were not present at all. And his mother added one more sigh to her fund of nocturnal sighing, a sigh for the son who had become a day-laborer....

It was at this time that Henoch became acquainted with Deborah.

The First Rendezvous

The official "acquaintance" between Henoch and Deborah took place on Sabbath afternoon in an orchard at Itte; it was a beautiful afternoon in summer.

The sun was shining brightly, apples and pears were ripening on the trees. Gooseberries and currants were ready to be eaten, plums were still green, cherry time was over.

The boys of the village, their books tucked under their arms, were walking about on one of the garden paths, and the girls of the village in their freshly-ironed calico dresses, their books under their arms, walked down the other path.

At the natural arbor near the large pear tree the two paths converged, and it always seemed to happen that the boys and girls came down both paths and reached this one spot at the same moment.

At the first meeting not a word was exchanged; glances darted from one group to another, that was all. At the second meeting one of the boys began to laugh, then the girls giggled loudly and hurried past. At the third meeting a daring boy directed a witticism at the girls: "Red cherries fall from the trees," and a dark girl answered, "Green apples are sour." At the fourth meeting, Leibel, the sewer of shoe-uppers who had lived in Lodz for six months, and therefore knew how to behave properly in the company of girls, made the boys come to a halt, and began to "introduce" those who were not yet acquainted.

Henoch Lipski was introduced by Leibel, Deborah Zlotnik

by Chanela, a worker in a stocking factory, who was acquainted with both boys.

Deborah was sixteen years old at that time, but the fact that she had set up her own little dressmaking establishment gave her "social position." The older girls admitted her into their circle.

Despite her sixteen years, and despite the heavy burden which had rested upon her young shoulders since she was a mere child, Deborah looked exactly the same age as she did when we met her for the first time. She had grown taller, but she looked like a precocious child.

In vain had her mother attempted to restrain her curly hair within the confines of two braids. But even the two red silk ribbons with which the mother tied the braids did not help. Her hair, which only yesterday afternoon had been washed in a basin of hot water, escaped the restraints of the braids, and, like young grass, like rare plants of silken down, it fell over Deborah's face, over her forehead and eyes. Deborah had to shake it out of her eyes with a toss of her head. She was small for her age, and looked like a child who was masquerading as an adult.

Since the eldest son had been sending money from America, and Moishele, "the Ox," brought home his earnings from the market place, Deborah's mother had given careful attention to her daughter's dress.

"She is a grown-up girl now, you know," she said to Ansel. And Deborah had a pair of dainty Sabbath boots, and—wonder of wonders—a new Sabbath-dress of wool, made in the latest fashion, with a large sailor collar, and a starched vestee in front.

For the first time in her life Deborah was formally introduced to a young man. To be sure, she, like the others, had known the boys since she was a child (who did not know one another in the little village?), but for the first time in her life she was "presented" to a young man. Deborah did not know what to do or what to say. She became as pale as a ghost,

began to tremble, and the blue veins in her throat stood out plainly, in sharp contrast to her dark skin. Her heart beat so loudly that its beating was almost audible. She blushed, then grew pale. Finally she recalled that she was wearing her new Sabbath-dress, made in the latest fashion, felt secure in the thought of the smart sailor collar, and calmed down.

Henoch felt even more embarrassed than she. He was not able to look any girl in the eye; he constantly glanced down at the floor, and he spoke in a voice as low as though he were about to whisper a secret to the little mice. So it was that Henoch stood there quite as embarrassed as Deborah, quite "gone," not knowing what to do with his long hands, and smiling foolishly.

At first all of them walked together, boys and girls, just as they happened to meet, and Leibel, the sewer of shoe-uppers, and Chanela, the worker in the stocking factory, made conversation for all of them. Gradually the group began to break up into couples; every one had his own "affinity," and the couples walked away alone. The only ones who remained behind were Henoch and Deborah. For a long time they walked down the path without speaking a word. Their hearts were beating fast, both averted their glances, both of them were at a loss as to what to say. Deborah sought assurance in the new dress which she was wearing and in the new shoes, Henoch in the new celluloid collar which he had donned for the first time in honor of this Sabbath-promenade in the garden.

When they were passing an apple tree, heavily laden with fruit, they accidentally bumped into it, and a ripe, red apple fell down and rolled near their feet. Henoch picked up the apple. Suddenly he offered it to Deborah without a word.

Deborah was frightened. She was ashamed to take the apple, and was afraid to refuse it, because that might appear provincial. Finally she accepted the apple without uttering a word, and when she had taken it, she did not know what to do with it.

"Deborah," Henoch began, "I should like to meet you alone somewhere"—and as he spoke he looked nervously away.

"Why alone?" asked Deborah; she did not understand what he meant.

"I should like to meet you all alone, when no one else is present."

Deborah did not answer.

"I have something to discuss with you"—Henoch added after a long silence.

"Why not? We can meet if we like," answered Deborah, whose heart was beating fast.

For a long time both of them were silent, as though they had committed some terrible crime. It was Deborah who made the next reference to the "rendezvous."

"Where shall we meet?" she reminded him.

"Do you want to come to the old mill? I shall wait for you there."

Deborah did not answer. After a while one of their acquaintances came up and asked, "What are you two talking about? Oh, a secret? Oh, I beg your pardon!"

"No, not a secret at all. We were simply talking a little," Deborah vindicated herself.

Then all the couples met again, and the boys and girls walked about together once more. The worker in the stocking factory sang a song, and Henoch and Deborah had no opportunity to complete their plans. But when they reached the path where they took leave of one another, every one shook hands with every one else, according to their usual custom. And not until Henoch extended his hand to Deborah, did she answer him:

"Yes"—she said it quickly, and in a strange tone of voice. Long, long afterward did this "yes" resound in Henoch's ears, like a glorious melody. It seemed to him that in this "yes" there lay infinite beauty, infinite charm, an infinite amount of something to which he was not able to give expression.

"'Yes,' she said"—he repeated over and over again. "'Yes,'

she said"—and he leaped through the streets like a wild goat. He could have embraced and kissed the whole world. He would have given a good deal to have had some one in whom he could confide.

There was no sleep that night for either of them. Deborah possessed a little mirror which she kept hidden away, but now she brought it out, wiped it off again and again, and regarded her reflection stealthily. Before she went to sleep, she braided her curly hair more tightly than ever, and fastened the red Sabbath-ribbon in as securely as possible, so that her hair might be neat. As for Henoch, he washed his celluloid collar carefully before going to bed.

The next day Deborah had to rip open three badly-sewn seams which she had sewed in Chana Reisel's trousseau shift. Mother made remarks all day about Deborah—God keep her—having had the Evil Eye put upon her by some malicious person. She looked, said her mother, as though she might be feverish. As a matter of fact, Deborah's cheeks did glow. Her father said that he had known for a long time that all was not well with the girl.

"I have noticed for a long time now that something is wrong with the girl, but I have held my tongue."

"Ansel, you frighten me. What did you know, what?" asked Sarah Rifke.

"Why, she walks about as though she were possessed of evil spirits."

"Be quiet, for Heaven's sake, be quiet."

When evening came, Deborah went over to stand in front of the house mirror. This mirror (an invention of Moishele, "the Ox") was improvised by stretching an old black coat of mother's back of the pane of glass in a closet door. Deborah regarded herself in this mirror for a long time, plaited her hair, and plaited the red Sabbath-ribbon into her braid. Her mother was filled with curiosity.

"What does this mean? Why all this dressing up, so different from what you usually do?" (By some stroke of good

luck, father was not at home, he had gone to the house of prayer.)

Deborah put on her wool Sabbath-dress, and went "out for a walk," as she explained.

At the sign-post which leads to the mill, Henoch was waiting for her. He wore his freshly-washed celluloid collar, and over it a ribbon tied in a fantastic knot served as a tie. By some means or other he had gained possession of a walking-stick, which had originally been part of an umbrella; this he twirled about elegantly.

When he saw Deborah coming, he fastened up his wrinkled caftan for the last time, pushed his side curls behind his ears, grasped his stick foppishly in the center with two fingers, and hurried toward her. When he came up to her, he stopped with a jolt, and smiled. "Deborah"—he began, and stopped.

She did not answer.

As far as the little woods they walked side by side in silence. When they had reached the little water mill, and seated themselves on an old log there, Deborah began the conversation.

"Why did you want me to meet you?" she asked, pouting girlishly.

"For no particular reason," he answered smiling.

"Why did you want me to meet you?" she asked once more.

"Just because—"

"Does one ask people to come, 'just because'?" she responded.

"I wanted to read something to you," said Henoch finally.

"What did you want to read to me?"

"A poem."

"A poem?" repeated Deborah, questioningly.

"Yes, a beautiful poem, by a new poet."

"Then read it to me!"

Henoch drew the poem, which he had found in a new Yiddish anthology, out of his pocket. In this lyrical poem there were allusions to springtime and May, to be sure, but in

addition there were also references to freedom. The poem threw Henoch into raptures, and he felt more at ease.

"Do you understand what he means by spring?"

"No, I don't understand that."

"He doesn't mean simply the season of spring. What he refers to is the time of liberation—when humanity will cast off the chains of slavery—when it will be freed—when the winter of sorrow will be a thing of the past, and the springtime of joy will come, when the flowing streams will be freed from the ice. Do you understand what he means by all that?"

"No." Deborah shook her head.

"By that he refers to the time when all humanity will cast off the fetters into which it has been thrown by tyrants, when it will free itself from the yoke of slavery—then only spring will arrive, then eternal freedom will throw its light upon all the world. Do you understand it now?"

"Yes." Deborah nodded.

Henoch stopped reading suddenly, and became lost in thought.

"Of what are you thinking?" asked Deborah.

"Of nothing at all," answered Henoch.

"Do you want to know why I asked you to come here?" he said suddenly.

"No." Deborah shook her head; she was afraid of what he was about to tell her.

But Henoch said nothing more.

Why don't you tell me?"

"No, not yet, I cannot tell you now, it is something very serious, it is a matter of life or death."

Henoch's words frightened Deborah greatly. But at the same time it pleased her to think that Henoch was talking to her about something so grave and serious, something that was "a matter of life or death," but she did not have the courage to ask what it was.

Then both of them were silent for a long time. Slowly and imperceptibly the night came upon them. Curtains of fog

came up out of the little woods, the sun left for far-off countries, and the last streak of red was drowned in a blue stream which poured out over half the heavenly dome. A feeling of purity and melancholy descended upon the world.

For a long time they sat and watched the celestial blue sea devour every bright little cloud, and it grew darker and darker.

Neither of them spoke, nor did they look at one another. When they finally arose to go back to town, they discovered that they were clasping one another by the hand.

For the Holy Cause

A NEW life began for Deborah, a life replete with expectation; her young blood was aglow with mystery, and mysterious dreams enveloped her soul in a blue haze. She sat at her machine and sewed shifts for brides and for women in childbed, and with every stitch she took she sewed in a dream, as if she were unconsciously expressing a desire.

In the evening she dressed in order to—as she told her mother—"go for a walk in the orchard." Then she hurried to the signpost; there she would find Henoch waiting for her, and always with a new book; with a shy smile he ran towards her, stopped with a jolt, and then they walked silently towards the log near the old mill, which was hidden under the poplar trees.

Every time that she came to meet him their hearts sang anew. Every time they walked together, silently, but with throbbing hearts, to the mill, was like a new quickening of love, a renewed emotion of nuptial joy.

Silently they walked. When they came to the log, Henoch bashfully drew the book out of his breast-pocket and asked: "Do you want to hear this, Deborah?"

"Yes," she answered.

Henoch read aloud, explained and interpreted. He lived in his books, and when he began to read he became animated, his embarrassment vanished, and by means of his reading he gave expression to that which he wanted to say to Deborah.

Sometimes she understood him, sometimes she did not. But is understanding really necessary? For her Henoch's books had

the same significance which the Thora had for her mother. And with pride and reverence she looked up to Henoch. She was grateful to him for every word which he spoke to her, grateful that he associated with her, that he read to her. She could not understand why he did it. What her father meant to her mother when he read from Holy Scripture, that did Henoch mean to Deborah when he read his books to her.

At one of these evenings by the mill, Henoch was in a strange mood; after he had read a little he began, suddenly: "Deborah, I should like to talk with you about something. About a very important and serious matter. I have been wanting to do it for a long time now, but I did not know whether I should—I do not know whether you will like me to do it. Shall I speak?" he asked.

"Do tell me," she answered, her heart beating fast.

"Do not believe that life is simple. Life is a serious, a very serious matter. And every one must have a duty to perform, must be able to fulfill his obligations. Do you understand me?"

"Yes"—Deborah nodded, although she had not the slightest idea of what he was aiming at.

"Do you want to assume an obligation too? Nobody must coerce you to do so, you must assume it of your own free will."

"What kind of an obligation?" asked Deborah.

"Your obligation toward the Holy Cause."

"What is that: the Holy Cause?"

"The Holy Cause, that is the Revolution."

"The Revolution?" asked Deborah, frightened.

"Yes," answered Henoch emphatically, and all of his shyness had vanished, "that is the liberation, the great liberation of all humanity, the Holy Cause."

"What must one do if one has an obligation toward the Holy Cause?" Deborah mumbled the last half of the sentence, as though she were afraid of desecrating the sacred words with her lips; with utter devotion she looked at Henoch, pleading for instruction.

"One must be prepared to fulfill one's duty at any time."

"At any time?" repeated Deborah questioningly.

"Even to pledge one's life!" concluded Henoch.

"Even to pledge one's life"—mechanically Deborah repeated the words in a timid stammer.

"Do you understand what I mean?"

"Yes," answered Deborah.

"And are you prepared to pledge your life in the fulfillment of this obligation?"

Deborah was too frightened to answer, but merely nodded her head acquiescently.

"And if your life is needed for the sake of the Holy Cause, will you surrender it?" asked Henoch, point-blank.

Deborah understood that her life was needed immediately for the Holy Cause, and was prepared to surrender it without delay.

"Yes, I will surrender my life for the Holy Cause," she answered with a pious quiver in her voice, as though she were in the synagogue in the presence of God.

"That being the case, we are brother and sister," Henoch held out his hand.

They clasped hands with all the sincerity, all the faith, all the ingenuousness of their young souls.

"Very soon now I shall introduce you to our comrades at a meeting in the woods," said Henoch.

"Thank you," answered Deborah with infinite gratitude.

"One thing you must bear in mind; as soon as you have joined the Party, you must be prepared to guard the secret, even to die in order not to betray the secret."

"Even to die," answered Deborah.

Then they were silent for a while. A great indefinable joy had come upon them and deprived them of words. For they had nothing more to say. Henoch merely brandished his stick about in the air.

"It is good, it is good!" he said in a low voice.

"What is good?" asked Deborah.

"Life, the world; life is worth while, death is worth while; don't you think so?"

"Yes," answered Deborah. Suddenly she added: "Henoch, I am so happy because I have met you; are you happy too?"

Henoch said nothing for a long time, but kept his eyes averted; then he stammered:

"Oh yes, I am happy...."

Both of them flushed and then turned pale, their hearts throbbing so loudly that each could hear the heart-beats of the other. So they sat for a long time, in utter silence. And suddenly it happened—Deborah embraced Henoch and kissed him.

Both of them would have been glad if the earth had opened up at that moment and swallowed them. Then suddenly great tears welled up in Deborah's eyes. She tried to hold them back with her hands and with her handkerchief, but she could not; she hid her face in Henoch's shoulder, and wept bitterly.

Henoch stroked her hair without looking at her.

"Why are you crying, Deborah? Why are you crying?"

"I don't know," answered Deborah sobbing.

Henoch asked no more questions.

When Deborah had grown calm again, it was as dark as pitch. Silently they walked back to town. But before they parted Henoch remarked suddenly: "For the sake of the Holy Cause one must sacrifice everything, even love. Do you understand, Deborah?"

"Yes, I understand," answered Deborah, with a deep consciousness of guilt.

And all night long she thought about what an unworthy creature she was, because she had not been able to restrain herself, and had desecrated the Holy Cause with her guilty love.

The Last Meeting

Henoch had walked past Ansel's house several times and had cast stealthy glances through the windows hung with white curtains. He could recognize Deborah by the silhouette which was reflected on the curtains; she was sitting at the window, reading.

He recognized the outline of her rounded face bent over her book, and framed by her heavy hair. Straying locks of hair, freed from the confines of her braid, hung down over her cheeks.

The next time he passed by he caught a glimpse of her neck, not merely in silhouette, but in reality, bent downward, covered with her heavy braid of hair. The next time he saw a bit of her face, the chin supported by her hand; then he saw her silhouette once more; her lithe form was like a reflection in a pool of water. The silhouette became dearer to him than her real person; it seemed to express more of her being and her character than she herself did.

Every time that Henoch went by the little house and looked in at the window his heart throbbed with joy and happiness. It seemed to him as though, in some way, his life had been enriched. Whenever he caught sight of her head, her face or her neck, or indeed her entire silhouette, he discovered a new charm and was happy.

Deborah did not know that Henoch walked up and down on the street in front of the house. And yet it seemed as though she were sitting at the window only to tantalize him the more; the rays of a prematurely-lighted lamp fell upon her face now,

accentuating in her silhouette the prodigal charm which played about her forehead, the refinement expressed in her finely-chiseled cheeks, the pensiveness which dwelt in her lowered brows, the pity which her tender young throat evoked.

All of this was brought out in the silhouette outlined on the white curtains, and most clearly when Deborah's head was bent down over her book, and her eyes were fastened on its pages. Her sweetness surged into Henoch's veins like a melody, appeasing the thirst of his longing heart and filling it with joy.

It was an evening in early autumn, towards the end of summer. The evenings broke early, trailing longing and melancholy in their wake. All of the solemnity of the days during which the pious Jews prepare themselves for the approaching and most hallowed of holidays, which are for them as days of judgment, permeates the air on these autumn evenings, oppressive, stifling. Every heart is tortured by longing and seeks a goal. Remorse comes into being, remorse for the past, fear of the future.

When these evenings arrived, when every soul was oppressed with melancholy, then it was that Henoch made his way to the Street of the Synagogue—all for the sake of catching a mere glimpse of Deborah's head, seen in silhouette against white curtains and visible through a window-pane.

This time he had been walking up and down the street for a whole hour. Slowly night approached, scarcely discernible. Now dark veils are flung out across the sky, and are gradually wrapping themselves round the radiant little clouds, which the setting sun has transformed into gold. The fire-rimmed little clouds continue to struggle, like goldfish in water, and they penetrate the dark transparent veils with glowing light; but the veils envelop them more and more closely, enfold them more and more tightly, extinguish their light; and from every veil which makes its way across the heavens an almost imperceptible shadow falls to the earth. Thin, transparent shadows

descend from the sky, enveloping all the houses, all the trees, all the fields. The meadows turn black. The trees appear strange and unfamiliar, as though they had suddenly shot up from the ground this moment.

Little, thin clouds of smoke arise from the chimneys above the houses, here and there the beams of a lighted lamp shine forth. The street grows empty. The singing of the children, heard but a moment ago, is silenced. Mothers call their children home. A Jew, belated, runs to twilight prayers in the synagogue. The last cow, fetched from the meadows at a late hour, returns home. Lights appear in the windows. Some one steps out to the front of Ansel's house and closes the shutters. It is night.

Henoch continued to walk up and down in front of the window. He wished that Deborah would come out, that she would notice him, but he did not dare to do anything to attract her attention. What should he say to her? For what reason shall he call her? How happy he would be to be walking toward the mill with her now, under the tall poplar trees, to be sitting there on the log, to look down into the green, dark, moss-covered water; so that the shadows of night might descend upon them, as had happened more than once during this summer....

He knows, however, that it is perhaps the last time he will see her. And he wants to tell her something before he takes his departure. He is about to go to the window to rap on the pane, but he does not do it. It is not fear, but something else which will not permit it, does not seem to grant him this boon.

While Henoch, yearning and undecided, stands there, some one appears in Ansel's doorway. Her mother? A brother? Henoch walks rapidly down the street. As he draws nearer, he recognizes something which seems familiar to him—that rare radiance which constantly hovers about Deborah's little person. He feels, without seeing them, the soft curls which fall about her face.

Shall he go to her or not? He looks at her, she looks at him,

and before he has time to look away again, she has already come to him and is smiling at him.

"Henoch?" she asks, and looks around anxiously.

"Yes, yes," he stammers.

"I did not recognize you at all," she says timidly, and looks around again.

He stands there and does not know what to answer.

"I am afraid some one might come out," she says, and glances around once more.

"Then I shall go," he turns to leave.

"Go out to the signpost, I will follow you soon," she says as softly as though she were whispering a secret in his ear, and vanishes into the house.

He is dazed by the secret which she has whispered to him, but at the same time there arises within him a certain regret, he is angry at himself, and does not know why.

Slowly he makes his way to the mill, as if in a trance. At the signpost he waits for her. She comes. Even at a distance he recognizes her figure. She moves toward him. He does not go forward to meet her. He waits until she is with him. She is wearing a shawl on her head. This, indeed, is an entirely new Deborah. For the first time he sees her wearing a shawl. She is quite close to him.

"Henoch, you wanted to see me?"

"Yes," he says. "Yes and no—I wanted to see you, and I did not want to see you."

"What does that mean?" she asks.

"Just what I say."

Suddenly she grasps the fringes of her shawl.

"You are wearing a shawl. I have never seen you wearing a shawl before."

"It is my mother's shawl," she says. "I was in a hurry."

They were silent.

"What have you been reading? I saw you reading—I saw you through the window."

"I was reading the book that you gave me."

"Which one?"

"Oh, you know," she says shyly, "the Russian one."

"Do you like it?"

"I do not understand Russian very well."

They are silent.

"Have you heard, Deborah, that I am going away?"

"Where are you going?" she asks.

"To Warsaw," he answers briefly.

Again both of them are silent.

"There is nothing for me to do here."

"And the Holy Cause?" she asks, softly.

"I shall be able to accomplish more there," Henoch answers.

"Yes." She nods her head.

"I cannot learn anything here from anyone. We are so cut off from the world here, no books, no teachers. In Warsaw I shall be able to learn something, find a teacher, get to know people."

"Yes." She nods her head.

"I should so much like to be able to do something. But I cannot accomplish anything while I am an ignorant man. I would like to study languages, sciences. I should like to know something."

"I only wish I knew half of what you know," says Deborah shyly.

"I don't know anything. What can I do for the Holy Cause if I am a stupid boy?"

"And what do you plan to do?"

"I shall go to Warsaw. Soon after the holidays are over I shall go. Everything is ready. I shall have a few rubles to tide me over the first days. I shall try to find work. If I do not succeed I shall go hungry. Maybe I shall be able to take a course of lectures, after that I shall study. I'll get books from the library. And then, until I know something—well then, I shall know what I must do with my life. Then perhaps I shall be able to accomplish something. But here—what am I here?"

"You are right"—Deborah nods. "You are right. You can

achieve any goal." Admiringly Deborah looks up at Henoch, and her eyes shine.

"I really don't know whether I am capable of accomplishing anything," says Henoch. "I really don't know whether I shall accomplish anything"—he adds softly.

"You will accomplish a great deal."

"What makes you so sure of it?"—Henoch smiles.

"Yes, yes, and don't laugh! You will be a great man sometime, you will reach your goal."

"How do you know that?"—Henoch laughs.

"Yes, I know it. For people have faith in what you say. You know how to speak in such a way that every one must listen to you. Sometimes when you make a speech in the woods, it seems to me as though a great rabbi were speaking. And one wants to do everything you say, just as though a great rabbi were giving orders."

Henoch felt abashed at her words, but just the same these very words filled his limbs and his blood with a fresh spurt of energy and lent him renewed self-confidence. He did not want to admit this, at first. He felt a sense of shame.

"I should like to have my life be a useful one. If I cannot do that, what is the good of living?" he said.

"You are right," Deborah answered.

"And you are going away too?" Henoch changed the subject. "I hear that you are going to America?"

"Yes, my brother sent us steamship tickets so that we can come over. We don't know as yet when we are going, but then it doesn't make any difference anyway where I am."

"Why do you talk like that?"

"What can I do to lead a useful life?"

"Every one can lead a useful life. You will be in America, and there you will work for the Holy Cause! I shall do it here, and the work will unite us, the great ideal," he added.

She regarded him with wide-open eyes.

"An ideal unites people, wherever they may be."

"Shall we be united?" Again Deborah lifted her wondering eyes to his face.

"Yes, the ideal will unite us wherever we may be."

"Then everything is all right," she said half to herself.

Now the Holy Cause attained to a state of divinity in her imagination, a something which must be served, something which could accomplish miracles.

Her weak feminine heart wavered, she wanted to grasp Henoch's hand in her own and kiss it. But she was ashamed, and afraid of destroying something by so doing.

Henoch was silent for a long time. Suddenly his hand stroked her shoulder, and he asked:

"Why are crying, Deborah?"

"I don't know." Deborah wiped her eyes with her shawl.

"You must not cry. It is not proper for Revolutionists to cry."

"I am not crying any more," said Deborah timidly, as she wiped the tears out of her eyes and smiled at him through fresh tears.

"Revolutionists must be strong."

"Yes," Deborah nodded.

Then they both sat down on the log near the mill. It was dark now. They could hardly see one another, but each was conscious of the proximity of the other. So they sat there silently, and held one another by the hand.

Before he took leave of Deborah, Henoch hastily placed a little paper-wrapped book into her hand. Then he left without saying another word.

At home Deborah opened the little package; it contained a book by Perez. And on the fly-leaf was written:

"*The Holy Cause will unite us.*"

Deborah never saw Henoch again.

CHAPTER IX

News from America

A MESSAGE had arrived from Shloime Chaim, the eldest son.

He had written that he would send steamship tickets for Deborah, and for Moishele, "the Ox." Then there was a silence of fully nine months, and no one at home expected to hear from him any more, and they had actually forgotten all about America.

Suddenly, however, a big package arrives containing steamship tickets for all the family, and with it a hundred-ruble note to cover traveling expenses to the port of embarkation.

The steamship tickets, so he writes, he purchased on the installment plan, and he adds that when the family arrives, a house with furniture, household furnishings and everything that is needed, will be ready for them. "Mother can leave her cooking pots at home. One can buy pots in America too."

He also writes that they must not waste time at home, but get ready quickly in American fashion. "You won't have much to pack up anyway"—he goes on jokingly in his letter—"tie up your bundles and see to it that you arrive for the busy season, and don't come right in the middle of the slack season."

Ansel did not quite understand what his son meant, but nevertheless he explained to his wife:

"By that he means the beginning of the semester, at the time when the children return to school."

Then he added: "I believe, Sarah Rifke, that the boy has gone mad."

"Why do you say he has gone mad?"

"Well, what does his letter mean? He wants me to pack up,

bag and baggage, and rush over to America helter-skelter? Is going to America like crossing the street? You might think that going to America was no undertaking at all!"

"But you always wanted to go, you wrote him one letter after another, telling him that the world was going to pieces here in the old country, and you kept asking: 'When will the Messiah finally arrive?'"

"And even if one says so, does that mean that one must act immediately? We have plenty of time to go to America! I should like to know a little more about the good fortune which he is having in America before I go."

"What do you mean by that? The boy has given the very shirt off his back in order to send for us, the child has sold everything, he has put himself head over heels in debt, and has done Heaven only knows what, to have us come to him. And then, all at once...."

"So, so, nothing else will please you, will it—only America? I ask you—what is wrong with this town? And who is able to promise me that we shall be better off in America? Why are you in such a hurry, tell me? Why this sudden hurry on your part?"

"On my part? You were the one who was forever shouting 'America!' You spoke of it constantly, wrote one letter after another, moved the whole world to accomplish your purpose. And now that matters have reached this point, now that the child is ready to have us come, then you shout at me that I am the one who wanted to go to America, that I am the one who thought of it."

"Who else, if not you? Did I, perhaps?"

And a domestic war was on, as though the most dire misfortune had befallen them. Ansel, who had been all fire and flame to go to America, now that the possibility was close at hand, made a fuss as though the world were coming to an end. But Sarah Rifke, as always, averted the catastrophe and calmed her husband down.

"Whoever is ordering you to go? Sit down and send the steamship tickets back to him!"

"Well said! Sit down and send the steamship tickets back! Very clever! If he had only sent us the handful of rubles which he paid out for the steamship tickets, we could have America right here, and would not have to drag ourselves over the wild sea, through storm and danger!"

"Well, we have plenty of time to think it over."

"Of course we have time to think it over!" Ansel calmed down. "First of all I want to see what we can do with the hundred-ruble note he sent, what we can do right here at home. Maybe we won't need America at all." Ansel drummed triumphantly on the table with his finger-tips.

All kinds of plans regarding the possibilities of the hundred-ruble note came to his mind. A windmill suggested itself to him, the thought of a store, and of going into partnership with the soda-water manufacturer. To think of all that might be done with a hundred-ruble note!

In the synagogue he expressed himself to the Elder Reb Braude, to the shopkeeper Reb Aaron, and to several other townsmen who congratulated him on his great good fortune, in the following terms:

"I always thought that the boy was joking. Oh, yes—a steamship ticket for my daughter, maybe for my son too, then we shall see.... But he sits down and sends me a whole packet of steamship tickets for all the family, for all of my large family. Why, that costs a fortune!"

"And what do you plan to do?" asked his listeners.

"What do I plan to do? Why, I am an American right now, I am no longer one of you. Maybe I shall wait for two or three weeks longer, maybe not even that long. My son writes, you know, that everything is ready for me over there: furniture, all the furnishings of a household—in a word, a palace. So why should I remain here?"

"And who will take your place as Thora reader here?"

"Am I under obligations to look after all the world? For all I care the sexton may do the reading. He has been aching to do it for a long time, and the asses in this town don't understand the difference between my Thora-reading and that of the sexton, anyway. That's as much as they know. And besides," he added, "my son writes me that in America they pay a Thora-reader twenty-five dollars for a reading of one weekly passage. And they are looking for Thora-readers. Not to mention the reading of the Esther-scroll at Purim, at all—my son says in his letter: 'You will be able to live off what you earn at Purim alone, with the reading of the Book of Esther, the Megillah. Now—is it necessary for me to stay here?"

But at home Ansel said after supper, as he began to roll his cigarette:

"Do you know, Sarah, what I have decided to do? We shall keep the steamship tickets, and with the hundred-ruble note I shall open up a business. When I and Moishele go into business with a hundred-ruble note, why, we can conquer the world." The fact that Ansel included his son Moishele in his plans made the mother's heart leap with joy.

"And, in case," Ansel added in a Talmudic singsong, "in case we should not succeed, there are still the steamship tickets, and then we shall go to America. Don't you think I am right?"

"Well, yes—I don't know— And what about Shloime Chaim? The child will be waiting for us," mother asks.

"Stupid, if we are happy over here, he will be just as well pleased!"

"Whatever you think, dear husband, whatever you think; you know best what we ought to do."

"I have a certain plan in mind," said Ansel, mysteriously, as he took his first puff of his after-dinner cigarette, "if that proves to be a success, dear wife, we shall have America right here"—Ansel pointed to the floor—"and we won't have to cross the sea. On the contrary, the cobbler apprentice and all of his precious America will come to us."

"May God grant that it be so!" Sarah Rifke sighs one of her well-known sighs.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile life pursued its even path. Signs of increasing comfort began to appear in Ansel's home. Deborah managed her dressmaking establishment, hired three assistants, and was the official, recognized seamstress in the town. Every trousseau was prepared by her. Her mother constantly made vows not to touch her child's earnings, to save them for the "happy day." But, while she put the gulden in the jug with one hand, she withdrew them with the other. The only vow which she really kept was that she did begin to save for Deborah's trousseau. Enough plucked feathers for three pillows lay packed in a sack under the bed, and, in addition, a piece of fine linen that she had bought from the wife of the shopkeeper, Chanele, on the installment plan. "Since I am not saving for a dowry, she shall have these, at least," said her mother.

Moishele "the Ox" was a merchant of some importance by this time. He had dealt in all kinds of merchandise, had taken a turn at purchasing or rejecting practically everything. He had sold grain, and he had then bought up eggs in the villages and sold them in the large cities. But bad luck was with him there, for he lost a whole gross of eggs. A wagon-wheel broke and all the eggs were spilled into the street. In that way Moishele lost the bit of money which he had saved. But he did not despair. Instead, he began to trade in calves' hides. And now he was working in another field; he was agent for the sale of gramophones.

As soon as gramophones came into vogue, Moishele immediately realized the possibility of "good business." First of all he had a gramophone sent to him from the city, complete with long rubber tubes. Two kopeks was the price asked for placing these tubes to one's ears and listening to a record, either of synagogue music or the folksong, "The Unhappy Bride." Every evening Ansel's house was filled with young

boys and girls, with older Jews and their wives, all of whom had come to hear the music.

Sarah Rifke constantly went about with her head tied up, because she had a headache; she stuffed cotton into her ears, and uttered a curse, saying that she hoped the boy would sink down into the earth, together with his "harmonica." The father liked it. "A box which plays." And he wanted to discover the secret of this phenomenon and find out why the box made music. He examined the gramophone until it broke, and had to be sent to Warsaw to be repaired. That was a bit of luck; for there was danger that the "great plan" which father had in mind regarding the investment of the hundred-ruble note had to do, in some way or another, with the gramophone.

The only happiness which fell to mother's lot, the little reward which she received on this earth for her trouble, was connected with her third son, Joine Gedalie. Sarah Rifke had but one wish, and that was to have educated children, and she did everything possible to give them, not merely a religious training, but also to raise them to the status of scholars.

She denied herself food to pay the school fee. The school fee was the most important matter in the entire household. Whatever else might be lacking, the fee had to be paid. If it was not at hand, a pillow was carried to the pawnbroker. Once even the two little brass candelabra had been pawned, and Sarah Rifke pronounced the Sabbath blessing over candles which were thrust into potatoes just so that the children might attend Hebrew school again.

And that's the way matters stood right up to the present time. "Why can't I, poor thing, ever get anywhere, but must rob my own poor daughter? For only one reason, because I have three children in school."

The three children are Joine Gedalie, her pride, who is already studying with the dajan, the judge; Izzy Meyer, called "the Boy" for short; and Nute, "the suckling" (both of whom Deborah had carried about in her arms until they were able

to crawl about on all fours). The two boys are still young and attend Hebrew school. For them and for Joine Gedalie she spent all the money which Deborah earned.

Mother's two eldest boys had not been a success. From the very beginning they had objected to studying, and mother had to use force to keep them at it, and chased them to school with a flourish of her broom. One of them had become a workman, the other, Heaven help us, a merchant, her bread-winner.

But Joine Gedalie, on the other hand, has turned out to be "a success." He is famous as a child prodigy all over town, and though he is only thirteen years old he is studying the most difficult passages of the Talmud with the judge, Reb Leibusch, together with the older boys. And father remarks: "Joine Gedalie is the only one who favors my family. All the others favor *her* family." But just the same she is his mother, she has borne him and brought him up.

Joine Gedalie got up at daybreak on the coldest winter mornings to run over to the house of prayer. There he sat, studying the Talmud until noon. One never saw him idling away his time; he was forever studying, and if not exactly studying, at least absorbed in some sacred book. Joine Gedalie was famous in the little town; mothers held him up as an example to their children. Blessings were showered upon him, and many wondered how the Thora-reader Ansel had come to have such a child.

Long sessions in the stuffy prayer house had made the boy thin and pale. His mother did all she could to provide her favorite son with everything. Even though there was no money in the house with which to buy dinner, something good and tasty was always prepared for Joine Gedalie. Mother cooked chiefly for his sake. "The child is sitting in the house of prayer all day; that certainly must weaken him."

And Sarah Rifke left no stone unturned to provide a bit of meat for the child every day, and to have soup for him two or three times a week. When she crossed the street, and saw

nice apples at the fruitseller's, she bought an apple with her very last groschen and cooked it for the boy, so that "he may have a little refreshment when he comes home from the synagogue, all tired out."

Even if no one else in the entire house had a stitch of new clothing for the holidays, there was always something new for Joine Gedalie, a new caftan or a new pair of shoes; and if there wasn't enough money for anything else, mother sewed a new shirt for him, at least.

And no one felt envious of Joine Gedalie. Joine Gedalie deserved it, for he was a student.

And when mother walked through the little street of the house of prayer, and the words of the Thora rang out through the open windows, then did Sarah Rifke's heart become filled to bursting with pride and happiness. That was her reward.

CHAPTER X

They Start on Their Journey

Ansel, the Reader of Scriptures, wrote a letter; in it he employed all of the rhetorical phrases of his youth, his "era of enlightenment," which he could still remember; in it he incorporated all the graceful flourishes which he, as Sarah Rifke's fiancé, had incorporated in his letters to her. The letters began: "To my son, the youth, the fruit of my loins, the joy of my soul." Who could have suspected that this mode of address was directed at no one else but the cobbler apprentice, Shloime Chaim?

This respectful and musical address was followed by a long story which related the details of what had happened to the hundred-ruble note which the son had sent to his father for traveling expenses.

"Do you know, my son," this letter went on, "that I missed being a rich man by a hair's-breadth? I should have won a fortune so great that instead of it being necessary for me to come to America to you, you and America would have come to me—if only my plans had succeeded."

There followed a long list of the glories which would have ensued, if his plan concerning the "soda-water venture" had succeeded. This one venture would have given rise to many others. Ansel recorded them all faithfully, as accurately as he could remember.

But all of these had come to nothing because the soda-water venture had petered out; and it had petered out because of a most insignificant circumstance, a "mere nothing." The machines which Ansel had purchased to use in manufacturing

soda water had turned out to be "no machines, but rusty iron, and to repair them, to make machines out of them, would have required the fortune of a Croesus."

The upshot of the whole affair was that Ansel had firmly made up his mind to leave "the old home" and to seek his fortune in "the new world."

He had not touched the steamship tickets; they were, he wrote, "just as you sent them to me, even to the envelopes; all that is lacking is the hundred-ruble note."

Of course he, Ansel, could, by the sale of his "property" be able to raise enough money to get to America; but, because it was impossible to make an accurate estimate of the amount of money necessary for a journey of that kind, and because one never knew what might happen, if one had "just enough," he is asking his son to send him another hundred-ruble note; then, he says, he will set out with the family soon after the holidays.

"And anyway," he concluded his letter, "I am tired of the old home. I do not want to stay here any longer, and would not, even though they were to make me governor of the Province. Do not think, my son, that your money is, may God forbid, lost. I have made a note of every kopek and every ruble which you have sent me. And when, with God's help, I arrive in America I shall pay it all back to you a thousand times over, capital with interest and compound interest."

. . . . . .

Several weeks later the answer arrived with a new money-order for the traveling expenses; it was accompanied by a short note: "I won't send money for traveling expenses again, for I don't have it." So then they began to pack up.

Until it was time for the journey, none of them knew exactly what America was. They all spoke of the trip to America, and had become so accustomed to the idea that the trip to America seemed like moving from one house to another.

Not until the journey was right at hand did they realize what America really is.

For mother the first and most important question was: "What shall we do with the cooking-pots?" It seemed to Sarah Rifke that she could provide the little food which she required for her household only with the aid of her own cooking pots, those pots which she had known for so many years, which knew all about her worries and troubles. They knew when mother had nothing to use in her soup, and they came to her aid, gave forth the flavor of their secret treasure-house to help mother in her hour of need.... It seemed to mother that she would not be able to cook at all with any other pots, for they would be strangers to her, and not understand her cooking secrets.

Many weeks sooner, even before serious preparations for the journey had begun, there was constant quarreling about the pots. Mother declared she would not leave "even a fragment of them" behind, but would pack every one of them up and take it along. Father answered:

"Everybody will laugh at you. America will hold its sides. Do you think that there are no cooking-pots in America? That you must bring them from here?"

Mother replied: "What do I care if everybody laughs at me, and America holds its sides? I want to have something in which I am able to cook."

Father said: "Stupid woman, the boy is preparing a palace for you there, as you know, with furniture, with cooking-pots, with everything!"

Mother retorts: "When I have my new pots, then there will be time enough to throw away my old ones."

When the travel preparations began in earnest no argument was of any avail. Sarah Rifke packed up all her cooking pots together with her dishes (and even her old spoons); the pot-lids too were sewed into the bedding, and everything tied up in a white sheet, as though America were a new house to which they were moving.

"How are you going to take all that along?" asked Ansel.

"The ship is large enough!" Sarah Rifke answered.

But Ansel was sure that his son had prepared for him in America, if not a palace, at least a handsome, well-appointed home, with new furniture, and a well-upholstered, comfortable sofa on which to take his afternoon nap. "And if we can't have that much, of what use is all that vast America, after all?"

But mother wanted to take along not merely the cooking-pots, but in addition every utensil and every piece of furniture. Even the smallest piece was dear to her heart. She was acquainted with the particular "history" of every piece, how difficult it had been to buy it, and how long it had been in the house. Every piece was like part of her life to her, and when the time came to take leave of it, it was for mother like taking leave of a living being.

At first she wouldn't allow anything at all to be sold. She wanted to take along the arm chairs, the tables, the cots, in short, everything. But gradually she came to realize that that presented real difficulties.

When at last the second-hand dealer, Chaim, came to take the things away, mother wept over each arm chair separately, as over a deceased relative; when the cot was taken out it was as though a corpse were being carried away. Even Ansel did not dare to mention the little Sabbath lights and the hanging lamp, and the cooking-pots too were all packed away with due honor, in the bedding. But the great battle was waged over Deborah's sewing machine. Mother was bound to take it along. She had tremendous confidence in the sewing machine.

"While the sewing machine is in the house we shall never be lacking our bit of bread," she said. She had had experience enough in these matters all during her long life. But how to take a sewing machine along? Ansel, however, had counted on the sewing machine to provide half the money needed for the trip, and for that reason he put up a battle.

"You want to take a sewing machine to America? All sewing machines come from America, and you are taking sewing machines to America? . . ."

"But it is our breadwinner; it earns our money for us," answered mother.

When, shortly before the departure, the agent Schmul came to fetch the machine, mother embraced it as one embraces a dear friend for the last time.

"It provided for us like a..." Sarah Rifke did not finish her sentence, for tears choked her voice.

Two weeks after the solemn holidays, when everything had been packed up, and they had finally come to terms with the emigration agent, Nute, about being smuggled across the border, and about the trip to the port, and when Sarah Rifke had taken leave of her dead children in the cemetery (she did not visit the graves of her parents, because they were buried in another town, and the trip was too expensive), Ansel with all his family was ready to leave the old home, where he, his parents and his ancestors had lived for untold generations. And now he was ready to emigrate to a strange country which lay beyond forests and seas, a country to which his son had gone before him, in order "to see if there was bread enough to eat in that country, for in his own country a famine raged."

On the last Sabbath preceding the departure, Ansel filled his place as Thora-reader in the synagogue, for the last time. It was a veritable concert.

Fondly, fondly, did he linger over every sound, carefully did he elaborate every phrase. His Thora-reading lasted until noon this time. There was one opinion and one only, everywhere in town: "Never before was there a Thora-reading like that one."

"I'll give them something to remember!" said Ansel when he had finished.

That night, on that very Sabbath, Ansel took leave; he and a number of other Jewish emigrants left town in the

wagon of the Agent of Emigration Nute. They left, never to return again—Ansel, his wife, and their family. Half the town accompanied them, and the lamentations and shoutings of farewell messages mounted to high Heaven....

PART II

Crossing the Red Sea

The journey of the Thora-Reader Ansel and his family from the old world into the new one was uneventful. Ansel, to be sure, as well as his family, was of another opinion. Sarah Rifke said more than once: "The world is coming to an end," and Ansel shifted the responsibility for all difficulties to the shoulders of his "shoemaker's apprentice" and his America.

Even at the border, when the family waited in a Jewish tavern, Ansel realized that there was nothing extraordinary about their family. Nobody knew who the Thora-Reader Ansel might be, nobody knew that the Thora-Reader Ansel was traveling to America with his family.

There were many men like Ansel, Jews from all parts of the world: from Lithuania and Poland, with or without wife and children; short Jews and tall ones, some with ample luggage, some with small bundles. There was more than one Sarah Rifke who had a family to look after. There were other mothers, too, who possessed treasured, time-tested kettles, and were carrying them along to America.

At first Ansel stayed by himself for, in the first place, he is Ansel, the Thora-Reader, the best one in the entire region, and in the second place he isn't merely one more emigrant going to America, but he has a son who is an American, waiting for him, and this son has prepared a house with furniture, bedding, and the very best of everything for his father. The "shoemaker's apprentice" had by now attained to such heights in the eyes of his father that Ansel referred to "my son in America" at every other word.

But it turned out that there were many such worthies as Ansel there. If he were not a Thora-Reader from some little village he belonged to the "aristocracy" by virtue of some other distinction. And every one had some connection in America; if not a brother, then an uncle or some other relative who practically owned America; in fact every one of them considered America his own personal possession.

There was only one among them all, a commonplace little Jew, a workingman—it was said that he was a cobbler—who was traveling all alone. He had left his wife and children at home, there was no one waiting for him across the sea, and there was no well-appointed home ready for him in America. He does not even know where America is, and why he is going there; he merely thinks that since half the world is going to America, he wants to travel that way too; after all, the world certainly can't have gone utterly mad. In all America there is only One whom he will know—but He is richer and greater than all sons, all brothers and all uncles. He is the "Lord of Creation," who is to be found in every country....

With this Jew, whose nickname was "the Palestine Jew," Ansel struck up a friendship. How this nickname, which had been given to the man in his home town, came to be known on the boat, nobody knew. He was called this because he said he was a Zionist, and was of the opinion that the Jews ought to go to Palestine and become farmers instead of emigrating to America.

The Jews—he explained this over and over again—must prove to all the world that they were a race of farmers, and not of merchants. And he added that, immediately upon his arrival in America, he would go out into the country with a shovel in his hand and show the Americans that Jews are not only petty traders but good farmers as well, better than the Gentiles—if they only want to be.

Nobody could quite understand how the Palestine Jew would manage to carry out his plan, for he had a weak heart

and always became sick at supper, so that the women screamed and said that the Palestine Jew was, God keep him, drawing his last breath. All of the smelling salts and bottles of scent which the emigrants possessed (and there were plenty of them, as every one was well provided with safeguards against seasickness) were pushed under the nose of the Palestine Jew, so that he might be revived.

But these symptoms—so said the Palestine Jew—were not caused by his heart, but by his kidneys; and his lung was not in good shape either, he said, an aftermath of a cold; and he had inherited his enlarged liver from his father; his father and his grandfather too, had, ever since he could remember, suffered from enlargement of the liver. "But all of that," he said, "does not matter; when I get out into the country, and take a shovel in my hand, all these illnesses will fade away."

The Palestine Jew and Ansel formed the "aristocracy" among the emigrants. They held themselves aloof and looked down upon the others who were principally workers and ordinary people. They represented the emigrants to the steamship agent, and threatened to enter a complaint against him with the "emigrants' aid committee," and to write to the papers all about how the agents cheated the poor emigrants.

Both of them compared the journey to America with the Exodus from Egypt and applied to it all the Biblical designations. First there was the Flight from Egypt (the passing over the border), then "crossing the Red Sea" (they referred to the journey across the ocean), and, not until then, the "conquering of the Land of Canaan" (the arrival in America).

The crossing of the Red Sea was a comparatively easy matter. The women, who up to this time had quarreled with one another constantly, became such good friends on shipboard that they put all their bundles into one heap and divided up all the delicacies which they had brought along for the journey. The men prayed together, discussed politics, praised "their" America, and made extravagant claims of wealth regarding the relatives who were in the new land.

The women prepared the meals together and shared every bit of food they possessed. If one of them prepared a dish of herring, every one on the whole ship had to have a taste of it; if one woman brought out a jar of cooking-fat which she had carried to the ship with her, another one was sure to show up with a pot of tallow from home, a third one had a glass of preserves to "cheer the heart," and everything was divided up.

Ansel and the Palestine Jew walked about on the ship as though it belonged to them. They climbed about among the boilers and engines and were determined to pay a visit to the captain so that he might show them the "great compass."

But the "anti-Semite" who guarded the door which led to the upper deck would not let them out under any circumstances. Even their threat of writing him up in the newspapers and of putting him in so unfavorable a light that no Jew would ever travel on this ship again, was of no avail. The anti-Semite remained obdurate, and would not let them go up.

Therefore, since they were not able to view the great compass with the weak eyes of the flesh, they examined it with the eyes of their imagination; standing in the space between the warm boilers and the long corridor, Ansel described the great compass and all its marvels to the Jewish emigrants so vividly that the Jews stood there with eyes and ears opened wide, as though Columbus himself were telling them about his first voyage to America.

Although the Palestine Jew did not agree, in every detail, with the description which Ansel gave of the great compass, still he had to admit when it came to knowledge of the sea and navigation, Ansel was better informed than he was. Sarah Rifke had more than one opportunity to be proud of her Ansel during the voyage, and more than once did she remark to the women who had gathered round her: "Would to Heaven that his ability to earn money were as great as his knowledge."

A Resting-Place for Children and Grandchildren

The arrival in the new country turned out to be very different from what Ansel had anticipated. From the moment of landing he was displeased by the many questions and the long waiting behind the iron grill, where they were retained as though he and his family were mere head of cattle. "I had that experience in Russia too; I didn't have to come to America for that."

All that was as nothing compared to their experiences in the new country. When they had left the ship, Shloime Chaim, the shoemaker apprentice, led them to their own home which he had prepared for them. Ansel had expected a palace, or at least a good comfortable home like in the old country, with two beds, a good deal of bedding, a clothes closet, and other respectable household effects. "Why, it was for such improvements that we dragged ourselves across the ocean, and practically gave away our own home and all our household effects, machines and factories" (Deborah's sewing machine had been transformed into "machines" in Ansel's eyes, and her dressmaking establishment had increased to factories).

But the eldest son led them all—Ansel, the Reader of Scriptures, his wife and the children, eight souls with all their belongings—into a basement room in an east side street, near the elevated. To be quite exact—a little alcove without a window was added to the basement room; that is, the alcove really did have a window, but it was right next to a high gray wall. The windows of the basement room were so covered

with lint that one could hardly see through them. On the ground floor directly above the basement room was a Roumanian restaurant, whose kitchen adjoined the basement. The smoke and steam from this kitchen filled the basement constantly, and the air was like that in a laundry. The odors which came out of the Roumanian kitchen irritated the throat, bringing on a fit of coughing; irritated the nose, bringing on a fit of sneezing; one's eyes never ceased to smart; it was as though onions were forever being sliced in the room....

The noise of the street came in through the two little windows and the open door into the basement, and all day long one saw nothing but feet passing by. At short intervals the elevated trains rushed along overhead; it seemed as though they rushed right through one's brain. Sarah Rifke stood in the middle of the basement with folded arms. The noise, the odors, the steam had confused her so that she scarcely knew what was happening; but when, gradually, she pulled herself together, she had the feeling that she and her children, together with their luggage, had been placed in the middle of the street with the words: "That is to be your home."

But Sarah Rifke never said a word. Her joy in having arrived somewhere with her "brood," and in having found a place in which to set down her luggage, overbalanced all other considerations.

Meanwhile Ansel, his hands behind his back, walked up and down in the basement, and examined his "palace" more closely. Almost half of the space was occupied by iron beds upon which lay long, wide mattresses. In the middle of the basement room stood a round table, of which one foot was missing; it was replaced by a little box. Near the table were a few chairs, only one of which really was deserving of its name, as the others were really boxes. But to make up for this, a new rocking chair stood in the little alcove, and Izzy Meyer, "the Big Boy," and Nute, "the suckling," had already had time to start a quarrel as to who was to be the first in

the rocker. The rest of the furnishings of the alcove, which was to serve as a parlor, were still lacking; all of that was to be taken care of later, during the more prosperous days which were sure to fall to the lot of the family here in America.

In order to obliterate the first harsh impressions, the eldest son had prepared breakfast and had it ready on the table. It included a little vodka; the children had their first taste of American rolls; and Isaac, who had been a teacher in a girls' school at home, but who, in America, was sexton of the synagogue "Ansche Zedek" of the Gostynin, and who always appeared at the home of any countryman whenever he sensed the least possibility of getting a drink of vodka, had come to the basement to greet his newly-arrived countryman, and to ask him in the name of the elder, and to invite him to read the Scriptures in the synagogue on the next Sabbath day.

When her first amazement had abated a little, Sarah Rifke began to unpack her cooking-pots, and to look about her in the new home. She was not yet accustomed to the noise of the streets, and the rattling of the elevated made her feel as though invisible spirits were chasing through the basement every minute, whistling and hissing. That, however, could be endured; but the odor of Roumanian food which came in from the nearby kitchen, and the heat which streamed out of the wall made Sarah Rifke's head ache as though she had been in a steam bath all day long. But she did not want to say anything to spoil her son's pleasure, and to make her husband feel even worse; so she bound a cloth about her head and went on unpacking her pots.

The faucet of the running water above the sink—the basement room had this convenience, at least—reconciled not only mother, but father as well, to the basement. When "the suckling"—quite by accident—discovered the faucet, and let the water run out, mother was terribly frightened; she thought that something awful had happened; but the eldest son quieted her, and instructed her in the use of the running water as

though it were his own invention, as he said, "Here in America, mother, you will not have to carry water from the pump, here you draw water out of the wall."

"Just like Moses from the rock"—father had found his sense of humor again, and stepped over to the running water also, in order to view the miracle more closely.

"Quite logical," said father; "it flows out of the wall, and flows away again through the wall."

These conveniences made the basement far more livable in the eyes of its new occupants. Ansel began to be reconciled to his new home, and also to the noise of the streets, and to the feet which ran past the windows. It was as though the American inventions were coaxing the newcomers, the "greenhorns," into the basement. Ansel had even revived his former enthusiasm for "the new world," and began to praise America once more. Some of the children, especially the younger ones, slipped away out of the basement, one by one, and up into the street. And mother made mental calculations regarding the number of beds and the amount of bedding at hand, preparatory to arranging adequate sleeping quarters for her family that night.

Mother was not allowed to cook supper the first day. The eldest son brought home sausage and rolls. Ansel said the evening prayer in the new home, and the son showed his mother how to light the American stove; this was the way in which he introduced the New York "Gas Company" to his parents.

In the evening many of their townspeople from the old country came in to welcome the newcomers, and to receive messages from the old home. The pastry-cook, who was the president of the organization of his townspeople, and also elder of the synagogue here, was among them. So was the cobbler Boruch Meyer, who had been their neighbor at home for many years. Nor was the sexton Isaac missing; and Taube Pessy, an old friend of Sarah Rifke's, paid them her first visit.

Every one of the visitors had a friendly word to say, and brought a present for the new home. The "shoemaker's ap-

prentice" lit a gas jet, which resulted in renewed amazement on the part of the "greenhorns." Suddenly several jugs of beer were standing on the table. The visitors talked about the old home, they encouraged Ansel, and they promised him all kinds of good fortune. Ansel paraded all his possessions, that is to say, all his children, before the visitors, who looked them over attentively.

"What can she do?" asks the pastry-cook, pointing to Deborah.

"She was the breadwinner of the household at home, she is a seamstress. Her fingers are precious as fingers of gold," says mother, boastfully.

"You will soon be able to get work for her," says the red-haired pastry-cook. "If you like, Shloime," he turned to the eldest son, "I'll send her to my father-in-law, a manufacturer, he will give her a job."

"And what can he do?" they all ask about Moishele.

"He is a merchant; there isn't another like him in all the world," mother says boastfully.

"Did you bring over any dollars?" asks the pastry-cook, jokingly.

Moishele is flustered, stands there a moment in embarrassment, but collects his wits immediately, and answers:

"To be a merchant when you have money, that is no trick, but just try to be one without it!"

The visitors laugh. Meanwhile father introduces his favorite: "He knows enough right now to put all the American rabbis to shame."

"Those American rabbis, they aren't so wonderful!" says Isaac, the sexton. It hurts mother to think that her "scholar" is wearing a torn cap, and she puts her hand on his head to hide the rip.

The visitors regard the precious jewel which Ansel has brought with him admiringly, and one of them begins to prophesy:

"Who knows, maybe our little townsman will bring great honor upon us."

The red-haired pastry-cook gets up, beckons Shloime Chaim into a corner, and whispers in his ear:

"Have they enough to live on for the first few days?"

He takes a few dollars out of his pocket, puts them into Shloime Chaim's hand, and says, loudly, so that mother may hear:

"Tell your mother that she can come to my store for her bakery. She can have what she needs on credit. When the boys get work, she can pay me."

"And she can always come to me for a pound of meat; it will be all right, I'll trust her for it," the butcher Samuel interpolates.

"Just the way it was at home"—tears come to mother's eyes. The first evening. By the time that mother had unpacked her bit of skimpy bedding to prepare the children's beds for their first night's rest, her heart had grown lighter, and, in her eyes, the basement had come to resemble the old home. She said to her Ansel:

"Do you know, Ansel, the world is the same everywhere. People are the same wherever you go."

Ansel said nothing.

"May God grant that this country will prove to be the resting-place for our children and our grandchildren, for all ages, until the Messiah comes."

Ansel said nothing.

On the Sabbath day Ansel was scheduled to take his examination in the Reading of the Scriptures before his townspeople. All week long he prepared himself for this, just as he had prepared for the reading of the Esther-scroll at home. It happened to be the very weekly portion which begins: "And leave the land of thy forefathers"—and these opening words Ansel identified with his own experience.

On the Sabbath all his townspeople gave him a friendly welcome at the synagogue. All of them greeted him with a

respectful "Peace be with you," and were glad to have a Reader of Scriptures from the old home. "Today we shall hear a Reading of the Scriptures as we heard it in the good old days, and not in the American fashion," they remarked to one another heartily.

Before he began to read the Scriptures, Ansel cleared his throat elaborately, and then he began. "'Leave the land of thy forefathers,' said God to Abraham," he trilled every word, he drew out every cadence and shading, as he was accustomed to doing. At first his townspeople licked their lips, motioned to one another, and said in stage whispers: "Now that is what we call a Reading of Scriptures."

But when the Reading of the Scriptures became prolonged, and the people grew hungry, their impatience was evident. The boys took off their prayer shawls and went out into the street. The older folks listened gravely for a while longer, as Ansel lingered over every word; it grew later and later, and the hunger of the listeners increased; they began to chat, and to joke with one another. At last one of the townspeople said in a loud voice: "Who is that 'greenhorn'?" Another one asked: "Is today Yom Kippur, by any chance?"

In vain did the elder, the red-haired pastry-cook pound on the pulpit and call out: "Quiet! Silence!" Most of the listeners allowed their impatience to break all bounds and began to make so much noise that poor Ansel abandoned all his trillings and cadences, and finished up quickly. Humiliated and alone he left for home....

CHAPTER XIII

Ansel Ends His Career as Reader of Scriptures

Ansel had come to America with eight souls in his keeping. And the eight souls stood in need of food and shelter.

During the first few days everything was marked by a festive mood. Soon, however, the workaday world asserted itself. They began to notice that all of this festivity did not provide a livelihood for them. For the present, mother obtained what she needed on credit. But the baker and the butcher, who had formerly been so glad to extend credit, made inquiries, constantly, as to whether the boys had not yet found work.

One evening the eldest son entered into conversation with his father. "Father," he began, without further ceremony, "things are not done here as they are at home. America is a different world."

"What do you mean to say by that, my son?" asked his father, eagerly.

"I want to talk to you about earning a living. There is no disgrace attached to work here. Every one works to provide for his wife and children."

"That's fine, just give me some work by which I can provide for wife and children! Why, that was exactly why you brought me to America."

"I happened to meet David Goldschmidt, one of our own townsmen, the other day. He works in a shirt factory in Brooklyn. Many elderly people like you are working there. And they don't work there on the Sabbath either. Gold-

schmidt wants to take you to the factory with him; he thinks that there might be work for you, too."

"What did you say? Did you say sewing shirts? What can your father do about sewing shirts? That is all right for Deborah, but what has your father to do with shirts?" mother objected.

"Deborah will find a job sewing women's blouses. But the season for that kind of work has not yet begun. I have been promised work for her in a week or two."

"I thought that maybe you had found a place for me as Reader of Scripture in some big, important synagogue," said father finally.

"Reading Scripture is no 'business' in America—one has no use for that here in America."

"So you expect father to turn tailor in his old age?" asked mother.

"To be a tailor is no disgrace here. Many respected Jews are tailors here, even rabbis. In this country that is not considered a disgrace."

"Then what you mean is—I am to be a tailor—that is what you want, my son? A tailor it must be, is that it?" father asked.

"For all I care, you can be a rabbi! But one thing I must tell you, father. Here, every one looks out for himself. This matter concerns *your* wife and *your* children, not mine. I have done enough for you now. I haven't even finished payments on the steamship tickets, and the next payment will be due soon. The next payment on the furniture, too. And the little ones will have to begin to go to school, or some one will be after us about it. An American school is not a Hebrew school. The children will have to be properly washed and dressed, or the teacher will send them home from school. That is the way America is. I really think that it would be best for me to move away from here. Then you would be forced to shift for yourself."

This last threat had a greater effect than any amount of

explanation. Mother looked at father; and father began to speak in a pleading tone of voice which was quite foreign to him, and which, even now, was not very convincing:

"What does that mean—you want to move away from here? And what is going to happen to us? You are going to abandon us to poverty?"

"It is perfectly obvious that that is the only thing for me to do. For your sake I have sacrificed almost everything. Other young men have big sums of money in the bank; but what do I have? All my life I have been slaving for you"—the eldest son indulged in a little self-pity, and tears came to his eyes.

Father and mother were silent. Deborah, who was present during the conversation, bit her nails; she was ashamed for her parents' sake; she suffered the pain of their poverty and humiliation for them, and said:

"Maybe I can take father's place in the shirt factory for the present."

"You'll have plenty of time to work! And *he* will have to go to work too (the eldest son pointed at Moishele), even your scholar (he pointed to Joine Gedalie) will have to take a job in a shop pretty soon! There are no 'scholars' in America who get free board. Every one here must work for a living. Don't forget that we still owe three hundred dollars for the steamship tickets. And we have to take care of the youngsters until they finish school. There are no idlers in America, every one must work here."

Moishele had quietly tiptoed out of the room and up into the street. Father, mother and the younger children sat there without making a single move, and none of them spoke a word.

But Ansel could not contain himself any longer. With a sudden start he arose. He had regained his former courage and pride, and with the true tone and gesture of a Reader of Scripture, he said:

"Yes, you are right, my son; every one must work in America. By the sweat of your brow shalt thou earn thy bread,"

he said with the intonations of a cantor. "Lead me to the shop, my son, I am going to be a sewer of shirts."

Tears rolled from Sarah Rifke's eyes, and while she dried them with her apron, she sobbed:

"To think that I have lived to see this day; the Reader of Scriptures in the Gostynin synagogue is going to be a sewer of shirts, just like a woman!"

"What do you mean, golem?" Ansel turned furiously on his wife. "They don't need any Readers of Scripture in America—no, in America they need tailors. Give me my coat and my walking stick—quick!"

Tears rolled down Sarah Rifke's cheeks as she handed her husband his rep caftan which she had made for him in honor of his trip to America; she put his stick in his hand, and Ansel accompanied his son to the shop of the Jew in Brooklyn, in order to become a sewer of shirts for the rest of his life.

In the shirt shop in Brooklyn, among the old Jews and the Italian girls, Ansel met the Palestine Jew whom he had known on the ship, the one who had constantly argued that the Jews ought to become farmers to show the Gentiles that the Jews knew how to work the soil. Ansel found the Palestine Jew sitting among the others on a work bench; he was holding a shirt in his hand, and an Italian girl was teaching him to sew on buttons. Ansel looked at him; the Jew looked up. When they recognized one another, their joy was great; they embraced one another like good old friends. Ansel asked his companion: "Is this the way you fulfill your sacred duty as a farmer?"

"Not here, but in the land of Israel, in Palestine, the home of our forefathers, that is where you will find me with a shovel in my hand; there you will find me in the fields," answered the Palestine Jew.

"And when will that be?" asked Ansel.

The Palestine Jew did not answer, but a fit of coughing almost choked him.

"When the Messiah comes"—Ansel answered his own ques-

tion. With a light heart he came home from the shop; he had found a companion.

That same evening Moishele came home very late, after supper. His mother was almost distracted; she had imagined that her son had lost his way. The eldest son had gone out to look for his brother; he found him in the Roumanian restaurant, busily washing dishes. Moishele slipped a silver fifty-cent piece into his mother's hand when he came home. That was the first money which the family had earned since it had moved into the basement.

. . . . . .

A few weeks later the basement in which Ansel is living with his family presents the following picture:

Dawn is just setting in. The yellow gas flame throws patches of light into the room and attempts to dissipate the darkness of the basement. Directly adjacent to the yellow light everything is brightly lit up, but the corners remain in murky shadow. Sarah Rifke is standing at the little gas stove and cooking coffee, just as she used to do in the old home; and she also packs up their lunches, and calls out into the corner from time to time, "Ansel, Ansel! It's getting late!"

"Eh, what?" Immediately Ansel is silent again.

Then his wife lets him alone for a while. She is sorry for her Ansel, for she remembers that he fell asleep at supper the evening before. "The poor thing isn't used to such heavy labor," she sighs.

Meanwhile Ansel dreamed that he was sitting in a synagogue filled with sewing machines. Tailors are sitting in front of the machines, banging away at them. The machines are humming. He, Ansel, is standing on the rostrum and reading the weekly portion.

Soon, however, Sarah Rifke remembers that her Ansel won't have time for his morning prayer, and she steels herself to her duty.

"Ansel, you won't have time for prayers."

The word "prayer" brought Ansel sharply out of his dreams.

It took him a good while before he remembered where he was, and who he was. But soon one could hear water running out of the tap. Ansel was up.

Suddenly Deborah appeared at the stove; her disheveled hair fell over her arms and back, which her chemise left bare.

She wanted to help her mother at the stove, but Sarah Rifke brushed her aside:

"Go, get dressed. The boys will be coming out of their alcoves in a moment."

Now Ansel's voice arose in prayer; even now, poor as he was, he could not refrain from raising his voice in the resonant intonation of a Scripture reading whenever he came to a Bible quotation.

Sarah Rifke reminded him that he was not back in the old home.

"Ansel, have you time for that?"

Father scarcely had time to lay off his phylacteries and to end his prayers before breakfast was on the table, and a package of lunch with a tin of coffee all ready for each one.

Then, quietly, and without a word, every one of the grown-ups left the basement, and made their ways to all parts of the gigantic city. Father went away, and so did Shloime, the eldest son, Moisheie (who was delivering packages for a merchant) and Deborah; they went away, as did hundreds and thousands of others like them.

After the grown-ups had left, the mother got the little ones ready for school—Izzy Meyer, the "big boy," and Nute, "the suckling."

Both boys were unrecognizable now. Their side curls had been clipped; during the two weeks which Ansel's family had spent in America, these two boys had undergone a greater transformation than all the rest of the family. Their mother dressed them up in the blouses which she washed out for them in the evening before she went to bed.

Every morning there was a pitched battle between mother and her boys about their prayers. That happened today, too.

Mother didn't want to give the boys their rolls until they had said at least half a prayer. But the boys drove a bargain with her every day, saying that they had to reduce the number of prayers they were to say to their Jewish God, in order to have time for the school work which (they said) they had forgotten to finish the day before. Their mother regarded this as a sure sign that they would go to ruin in America.

Only one of them stayed at home, the only one whom the parents had succeeded in guarding from America's factories and America's schools—Joine Gedalie, the scholar. His mother put up a fight for him, and protected him from America's fire, which threatened to devour Ansel's family. What a pity to waste such a brilliant intellect on an American school! And from one Sabbath to another, Ansel postponed the duty of inquiring about a Jeschiwa, a Talmudic academy which would be a suitable school for the boy to attend.

CHAPTER XIV

Longing

The roaring noise of the street penetrated into the room unceasingly, entering through walls, windows and doors; it was as though the waves of the sea beat against the window.

It was evening, the time when the workers returned from their labors, when the street peddlers displayed their merchandise on the stands, and acclaimed, with bellowing eloquence, the cheapness and excellence of their wares. A Jew who sold bananas had stationed himself directly opposite Ansel's windows; every time he cried his wares he made an ear-splitting noise.

From time to time, in the midst of all this uproar, the blunt friction of steel wheels on steel tracks made the senses reel; that was the elevated. The muffled-shrill squeaking of the steel above their heads made the walls tremble. The panes of the little windows rattled, and it seemed as though they might drop out any minute. Moreover, this noise did not seem to come from within, but from without.

Whenever the dull screech of steel resounded overhead it was as though something were ripping through the brain....

Opposite the windows facing the street some little boys had obviously built a bonfire; for, through the bits of fabric which Sarah Rifke had hung at the windows to serve as draperies, there flared, from time to time, the gleam of firelight, which was accompanied by a childish shout of joy. Right now nothing could be seen through these curtains; but so much the clearer was the sound of the procession of feet which marched past the window. The panes never ceased to

rattle. All of these voices, shrieks and sounds were accompanied by a steady humming noise which originated in the Roumanian restaurant above the basement. It was like the constant chirping of thousands of crickets, and all the other sounds were enveloped in and benumbed by this one.

In the basement a Sabbath quiet reigned.

The light of the four candles on the table penetrated through the curtains out into the street. At the head of the table sat Ansel and hummed his Sabbath songs, sleepy-eyed; with a stern glance he tried, from time to time, to encourage his bored children to sing with him. But they were little concerned about these rebukes. Their thoughts and desires were out there at the bonfire, where they played every evening; they resented the fact that their father was introducing a "new custom" here; none of the other boys on the street had to sit quietly at the table on Friday evenings, and sing hymns of praise. So the two boys squirmed from side to side on their chairs, and kept their eyes on the window; they were waiting for that happy moment when "Pa" would go to sleep, so that they might get out onto the street before the bonfire died down.

The eldest, Shloime, was missing at the table, because he had become acquainted with a girl, and was seldom at home in the evening. He had even told his mother to look around for a roomer, because he was thinking of getting married. The second son too, who had been called Moishele in the old country, was also missing; during the brief period since his arrival in America, he had already found time to change his name to "Sam Moses." Nobody knew why he had taken on a new name; but true it was that Sam Moses had displayed a remarkable attitude of independence from the first moment after he had touched American soil. He was the first of them all to earn money and to bring it home to his mother. Every day he found new employment. At the present time he was making deliveries for a delicatessen store. From this store he brought home to his mother all kinds of foods which greatly

augmented the bill-of-fare in Ansel's family; but, in return for this, he had asked his father not to bother him about putting in an appearance at home on Friday evenings or Saturdays. He explained to his father: "On Friday evenings I am busier than at any other time, because every one needs groceries for Sunday."

Joine Gedalie, however, sat at the table as he had in the old days, and helped his father with the Friday evening ceremonies. Joine Gedalie did not have a job as yet—but neither did he study. Father still promised to make inquiries about a good Talmudic academy, where he could study to be a rabbi in the American manner, including courses both in the Talmud and in English. But Ansel never seemed to find time to do this. Meanwhile Joine Gedalie had obtained books somewhere and was studying English by himself. Mother was afraid to tell father that Joine Gedalie spent whole days away from home, and that when he returned, he brought back a whole stack of English books, but never looked at a Hebrew book any more.

Nevertheless Joine Gedalie did the praying for every one in the family, so to say, and did this every day, thus preserving the Jewish customs of the household. He indeed was the only one in the family who helped his father establish the old home-like Sabbath spirit in the strange noisy basement.

There was one other person who was at home on Friday evenings to help welcome the Sabbath to the basement; that was Deborah, who, since she was a child, had had the habit of washing her hair on Friday evenings. Even in America she kept to this habit. Since she has come home late from work, however, she is sitting by the stove and drying her moist, flowing hair, just as she had done in the old days every Friday evening.

Clearly, solemnly, do the candles burn on the table; they have been thrust into the two brass candlesticks which were brought from the old country. They do not, to be sure, shine

quite so brightly as they did on Friday evenings in the old home; nevertheless, Sarah Rifke has found time to wipe them off with a damp cloth, and the sheen of the little red carafe which she had also brought with her from the old home helps to conjure up the memory of the Sabbath in the little Polish town across the sea.

All week long, while Ansel is sitting at work, and hears the humming of the machines in his ears, he feels cut off from his former life; but when the Sabbath candles burn in their familiar holders, on the table, and the little old carafe with its red wine glows in the candle-light, then life in the basement-room unites with his former life in the old home, and the two blend into *one* world—the sea which lies between the two worlds vanishes, and once again there exists for him a unified life of a unified family.

However tired and sleepy Ansel may feel from being humped up over his shirts and the machines, day after day—nevertheless on Friday evenings he is conscious of the spirit of the Sabbath. The noises of the street disappear, and he no longer hears the tumultuous roaring of the elevated, or the humming noise of the Roumanian basement. Peace descends upon the basement, peace descends upon Ansel himself, and the spirit of the Sabbath steals into his heart.

With a valiant effort he manages to keep awake, his song increases in volume, and his imperious glances spur his bored children on. Then, when Sarah Rifke brings the hot soup to the table, Ansel, his head in his hands, becomes lost in thought.

"Of what are you thinking, Ansel?" Sarah Rifke recalls him from his reverie, as she puts the plate of steaming noodle-soup in front of him.

"Tomorrow the weekly portion will be read in the synagogue," says Ansel, half to himself.

Sarah Rifke goes into a reverie herself. A lump rises in her throat.

"Do you want to go back just for that?" she asks with

mute reproach, which, to be sure, she seems to be directing at herself. "You'd better eat your soup before it gets cold."

And with a sigh Ansel pulls his plate towards him.

"This is a topsy-turvy world, that's all, how can you help that? The ignoramuses have the upper hand here," says Sarah Rifke, as though she were making a personal apology.

Ansel says no more; but after he has finished his meat, and before he says the prayers he takes up his little Bible, and turns the pages, as it seems, quite casually. Then he begins to recite the weekly portion, at first merely humming to himself, then louder and louder, then with a flood of melody, with tenderness.

Sarah Rifke sits there, at the table, holding her head in her hands, and listens to him.

In the basement apartment there was still another soul consumed with longing.

Four months had gone by since Deborah had been living in the huge, strange city, surrounded by millions of people, like a plant which has been torn out of the soil and transplanted into the desert. Nobody knew her, and she did not know anybody. Among millions of people she was lonesome and alone. There she sat all day long among strangers. In the evening she rode home. At first the way home seemed interesting to her, the novelty of the surroundings aroused her curiosity. Then she became bored by it, and now it seems hollow to her, futile, purposeless. Everything seems strange to her.

Deborah longed for her old home. But what was it for which she really longed? The evenings by the mill? Henoch? She longed for something that was connected with Henoch, for those evenings in the fields and woods, for the Sabbath walks in the garden.

All of that, in some way, had had a meaning; all of life had had a purpose, and it was this purpose for which Deborah was longing. She called it by the name which Henoch had given it: the Holy Cause. By virtue of the Holy Cause life

had attained value and charm, the world had seemed like a different place, she herself had felt identified with something, she felt that she belonged to some one. Here she is alone, all alone in a huge city. Isn't it possible that somewhere in the big steel buildings with the many windows which look down upon her, that there may be a Holy Cause for whose sake life becomes worth while, and which gives life meaning?

Henoch had told her that the Holy Cause would unite them, no matter how far apart they might be. But where is the Holy Cause? In which of the tall steel buildings of this metropolis is it to be found?

In the little box which she had brought from home with her, she found several books. One of them was the book which Henoch had given her when he took leave of her. To these books Deborah turned in her hours of melancholy and longing, and so she had read them often, and was well acquainted with their contents; still she always returned to them again, just as on this nostalgic Friday evening.

She took one of them out of the box and began to read it anew by the light of the Sabbath candles. Although she had read it over many times, she became entirely absorbed in it, as though, somewhere in its well-thumbed pages, she might be able to come upon the Holy Cause again, which she had lost in this new, alien city.

The First Disillusionment

The shop in which Deborah was working was a non-union one. At that time the needle-workers were not yet organized, and Deborah's brother had found work for her where he best could. The shop was not large. In many respects it resembled the tailor shop in which she had worked in Poland. A few other girls, older than Deborah, worked there also. They looked sad and care-worn. They seemed to be so submerged in their own troubles and difficulties that they had no time to give any one else a thought. They scarcely knew one another. There were both Jews and Christians among them. Several middle-aged Jews were working there too. The owner, a man with a short, blond beard, had just been married, and was eager to make money in a hurry. He was owner, foreman, cutter and finisher all in one. Not only did he himself work along with his assistants, but his wife came to the factory too, during the course of the day, to help at the sewing machine.

The boss speeded up his workers, not with words, but with work. He and his wife worked at lightning pace, and so they were able to perform their own duties, and also to prepare work for the "hands" at the same time. The boss often stayed in the shop until almost midnight, and prepared the work which the "hands" were to do the next day. Everything went ahead quietly in the shop, every one hurried, and every one was busy every minute. No one spoke a word. Every one sat at his "piece work," absorbed in his work and in his own thoughts. Deborah did not know any of the workers, nor

any of the girls; no one spoke a word to her. She came alone, and she went home alone.

At first it was hard for her to realize that this really represented life in the big city, that there was nothing but this silent, ceaseless labor. She thought that the reason for this was that she had not yet become acquainted, and therefore had no opportunity of coming into contact with the finer aspects of the workers' lives. More than once she thought of asking her co-workers whether there were not, somewhere, a meeting-place for the workers, but she was too shy and backward to make friends. Finally, however, she could stand it no longer; life in the shop had become unbearable to her, life at home was a complete void, and she sought something which would give her existence a true significance. Her choice fell upon one of her co-workers, because the appearance of this girl appealed to her more than that of the others. The girl was older than Deborah, but not so old that Deborah stood in awe of her. Although they had been working together in the same shop for almost three months, they had scarcely spoken five words to one another which did not have some bearing on their work. Deborah blamed herself and her reticence for this. One evening, when closing time came, she arranged matters so that they might walk down the stairs together. Although the other girl hurried along, Deborah caught up with her, and went up to speak to her.

"I beg your pardon, I am still a greenhorn," Deborah began with a guilty little laugh; "I wanted to ask you something."

"Please do," said the other girl, looking at Deborah in amazement.

"In the old country I belonged to the Holy Cause, and I would like to belong to it here too. Isn't it possible to do something among the workers here for the Holy Cause?"

"What is that?" The girl turned to Deborah in surprise.

"Why, you know very well what I mean."

"No, I don't know," the other one answered impatiently.

"I mean—a place where men and women workers get to-

gether; don't the workers meet here as they do in the old country?"

"Oh, that is what you mean! Oh yes, we get together here, in public halls, at the time of a strike."

"In which 'public halls'?" asks Deborah, and does not understand her own question.

"If you will take my advice, you won't talk about it. Our boss doesn't like things like that. You might lose your job."

Deborah stood there in embarrassment, and flushed.

"Oh, it's all right to talk to me about it. I won't give you away, but it's better to be careful with the others. If the boss discovers what you are asking about, you will be fired immediately."

"Please forgive me," said Deborah confused.

The other girl left. After a while she turned back again, and said to Deborah, "Don't be afraid. I won't betray you, but be careful about talking to the others, if you want to keep your job."

Deborah said nothing.

"You are going to take the elevated?" the other girl asked.

"Yes, we live downtown."

"Have you been in this country for a long time?" the other girl continued the conversation.

"No, only a few months."

"That's easily seen; you probably belonged to the Socialist party in the old country."

"Yes," Deborah nodded.

"I was connected with the movement, too, at one time. But now—I have no time for such things. We have other things to think about in America. Excuse me for having answered you as I did before. You see it was so hard for me to get this job. I was out of work for more than six months. I am not alone, I have a sick mother to support. It is so hard to get a job these days. And when one finally does have a job, one is afraid of losing it. Our boss is strict. He asked me all kinds of questions before he finally gave me a job. He

only accepts newly-arrived immigrants. A union-worker doesn't stand a chance with him, he is so afraid of having a strike. You have to be careful, you have to watch out with whom you talk, you never know with whom you may be dealing, you see...."

Deborah did not "see" at all what the other girl meant, but, as she was ashamed to admit it in order not to appear to be too much of a greenhorn, or because she wanted to be alone, she nodded her head acquiescently, and went away.

"Don't think for a minute that I would not prefer working in a union shop. Of course I would rather be in a union shop, but what can one do if one can't get work? I suppose you have had the same experience, haven't you?" said the other girl, before she left.

After having had this conversation Deborah had no desire to leave for home immediately. She lived only a few stations away. So she walked, as she did quite often. She was not thinking of anything in particular, but a great yearning gnawed at her heart, and, for the first time, she was sorry for herself. She felt so lonely, so miserable in the big city, as though she had lost her way in a barren wilderness.

A light fluttering snow was falling, and covered the streets. Through the veil of the hazy snowfall, the yellow-gray light of the gas lamps fell upon the furniture stores and fashion shops. The streets were lively; working people, both men and women, who had been sitting at work all day in the stuffy shops greeted the transparent, playful snow with silent delight. In the show windows complete living establishments were displayed, including even dining-rooms and bathrooms. They seemed to invite the passers-by to come and be comfortable in these rooms. Young couples stood gazing into these windows, inspected the furniture, and made plans for the future. Others stopped in front of the display windows of the fashion shops and stared at the wax mannequins who, in festive mood and elegantly dressed like living beings, sat in the cozy bright windows and looked happy. Deborah, too,

stopped near the luxuriously-decorated windows and stared enviously at the lifeless but happy mannequins who were so peaceful and happy. They did not have to go looking for work; all they had to do was to sit there, "entertain," and drink tea, and they are dressed either for the ball-room or for the street, and enveloped in rich furs.

Suddenly the thought of the monotonous workshop became obnoxious to Deborah. For a long time she had realized that her life had grown meaningless, that the constant silence and the hurried work alike were meaningless. But she had not known that she was able to rebel against it. Now, however, standing in the merry, playful snow, before the bright display windows in the midst of gay moving throngs, she knew without a doubt that she would be able to rebel against devoting her life, day after day, to this traitorous work.

When she had admitted to herself that she was employed in a shop that was opposed to the welfare of the working man, she became afraid of herself. "To think that I could be so faithless to the Holy Cause, and to the oath which I swore!" All of a sudden she saw before her the woods in the little town in Poland; she saw Henoch and the other workers, she heard them singing their song of allegiance.... All at once it was as though she had been pushed off the edge of a precipice, and as though she were clutching at branches and bushes and trying with difficulty to clamber to the top once more.

A feeling that resembled resentment against her mother, her brothers, and all the rest of her family, rose within her. She would have liked to free herself from them, to be alone for once, to live by herself. Yet she felt pity for her mother, and at the same moment, she was angry at herself for weakening, for feeling pity.

When she arrived at home, all the others were there before her. Her father sat at the table and had finished eating. The eldest brother was washing and dressing himself, because he was going out with his fiancée. Deborah's mother was waiting

anxiously for her daughter to come home, but instead of expressing relief at her arrival, she began to rebuke her:

"Where have you been? I was afraid you had met with some accident."

"Why are you so nervous about me? Why do you guard me so closely? Why do you keep me so chained up? Why, oh why, so chained up?" Deborah repeated the words which, it seemed to her, best expressed her feelings of that moment.

"What do you mean by that? Who is chained up? What are you talking about?" asked Sarah Rifke, frightened, as she did not understand what Deborah meant.

Deborah said nothing and went over to her bed, the only sanctuary in the home which was really her own. Still wearing her coat which was covered with snow and her wet hat, she sat down.

"What is the matter with you? Why don't you take off your things? Go and eat. Your dinner is cold, even now."

"I am not hungry," said Deborah, pouting like a child.

"What ails you? Are you, Heaven help you, ill? Has any one harmed you in any way?" asked Sarah Rifke uneasily.

"I am not ill, and no one has harmed me in any way, either."

"Then why do you sit there like that? Do take off your wet wraps. What is the matter with the girl?"

Ansel, who had taken to reading a Yiddish newspaper when he returned from work at night, had finished his supper, and was sitting at the head of the table in cap and caftan, wearing his spectacles, and absorbed in the large newspaper which entirely covered his face. All that could be seen of him was the thick smoke of his cigarette which he regularly begged of his son after every meal (and which his son regularly begrudged him). Ansel put down his paper, pushed his glasses up on his forehead, and peered into the corner where Deborah was sitting on the bed.

"I really don't know what ails the girl," said her mother, who was standing beside Deborah.

"What is the matter?" asked the eldest son nonchalantly in English. He was standing near the sink, shaving himself at the little mirror which hung above it. He did not even stop shaving as he spoke, nor did he turn his head away from the mirror.

"What kind of shop is that anyway, to which you sent me?" Deborah suddenly called out of her corner to her brother.

Now the conversation began to be interesting. Solomon (his fiancée had given him this name and he had informed his people at home that from this time on his name was no longer Shloime, but Solomon) turned round and looked at his sister.

"What is the matter with the shop?"

"I am not going to go back there to work any more."

"Why?"

"It isn't a union shop."

Every one was silent with astonishment. Even Ansel's newspaper trembled. Mother, who did not know what it was all about, stood there helpless and confused, and looked to her husband for assistance. But Ansel himself was completely at sea, and left the dispute to the brother and sister.

"What did she say?" Solomon begins. "A union shop! How do you know what a 'union' is?"

"I know, that's all."

"How do you know? Who told you about it?"

"I knew what it was even before I came to America."

"Really? Then you ought to have stayed in the old country. Here, dear sister, you won't get very far with the 'union.'"

"I wish I had stayed in the old country," said Deborah, half to herself.

"What is this quarreling about?" asked Ansel of his son, peering out from behind his paper inquisitively.

"Your daughter is a Socialist, and she doesn't like the shop

which I found for her, because there are no Socialists working there. Well, let her find a shop for herself."

"Oh, so that's it! Those are the people who want to throw the kings off their thrones, aren't they? There's something about them in this very newspaper." Ansel pointed to the newspaper which he was reading. "I had no idea that I had a daughter who is a Socialist. Of course America is a free country, here you may be anything, my dear daughter, that you wish. Here you are permitted to be a Socialist." Ansel pointed to his newspaper as though it were an authority on the subject.

"Deborah," interrupted the mother, "if you don't like the shop, you don't have to work there any more—you'll find another job! Now go and eat, your soup is getting cold."

"Oh yes, she'll find a job in another shop!" jeered her brother. "The jobs just wait for her."

"I won't go and work in this shop any more," said Deborah with a determination that she had never displayed before.

Her father had put his newspaper aside, and looked over in the direction of the corner where Deborah was sitting. Her brother interrupted his shaving, and looked, first at his mother, and then at Deborah.

"What are you thinking of?" he began. "You will be sitting at home like that fellow"—he looked over toward Joine Gedalie, who always shrank into the corner guiltily whenever any reference was made to his not working—"like that one whom father insists on making a rabbi. There is *one* superfluous mouth in the house to feed now, and you want to stay at home too! And who is going to pay the rent, the gas bill, and the grocer? And who is going to make the payments on the steamship tickets that brought you over? Who is going to pay those? I am, of course, I am to pay everything. Isn't that so?"

Ansel who, since he had gone to work, regarded himself as head of the house once more, and had regained the pride which had characterized him in the old home in Poland, interrupted: "It hasn't come to that yet, that you are going to have to pay

for all that. There is, God be praised, some one besides you who is able to do a little paying."

That was too much for his son. With one cheek cleanly shaven, and the other still creamy with lather, he stood up in the middle of the room, and said, wallowing in self-pity:

"Is that so? And who sent you your money, more than three hundred dollars? And steamship tickets and another hundred rubles? And rented an apartment for you? And furniture? Because of you I have not married, and am wasting my life. And now, just when I want to begin to look out for myself, to do something for myself, now *he* wants to be a scholar, and I must look out for him; *she* doesn't want to work in any shop that isn't Socialistic, so I shall be forced to support her too. I am to do everything. But no! You are not 'greenhorns' any more, you can take care of yourself now. Why should I worry about what you are going to do? In America every one looks out for himself."

"He must have learned that kind of talk from his fiancée," said Ansel.

"If that's the way it is—all right, I'll move out tomorrow; you can see to it how you can get along without me," said Solomon, and wiped the soap from his face with the towel, quite forgetting his unshaven cheek.

As always, the words "move out" evoked a great fear in the heart of Sarah Rifke. She began to make calculations in her mind—rent, grocer, butcher and other worries. She was frightened. Ansel was a little bit frightened too, but he was proud at the same time. The Ansel of the old country was awakened within him; and although he was really in a turmoil at the threat which his son had made, nevertheless he said:

"Well, move, go ahead and move out! God didn't desert us when we were back in the old country, He won't desert us here either."

Sarah Rifke stood there anxiously, yet at the same time she was proud of her Ansel's resolute stand. She made one last attempt at reconciliation, and went up to her son.

"Now, what in the world did he say to hurt your feelings?" she tried to appease her eldest son.

"As long as I stay with you, you will never amount to anything in America, but will always be greenhorns." With these words Solomon hastily drew on his coat and left the apartment.

Hard Times

That night the eldest son did not return home to sleep.

The next morning, after every one had gone to work, and mother was doing the washing, Solomon came home and began to pack up his things without saying a word. His mother wiped her wet hands on her apron and approached her son with a pleading gesture.

"Shloime, my child, what are you going to do?"

"I must get out of here."

"And where am I to go with my poor little birds?"

"Where? I'll let your husband worry about that."

"But what did he say to you that was so terrible? After all, he is your father," said his mother tenderly; she is trying to embrace her son, and to ask pardon for the father with a kiss.

But Solomon turns away from her.

"That isn't why I am going. I'm not moving because father offended me. I made up my mind long ago that it would be better for you and for me too if I went."

"And now are we going to get food? Who is going to support me? Your father with his seven dollars a week? Or the girl who is working her fingers to the bone? My heart aches whenever I look at her. Since she has come to America she is a mere shadow of her former self. And how do I know whether she went to work today or not? I hope she didn't. She really ought to take a rest for a few days. What am I going to do without you? Where am I to get the money for the rent, for..."

"And that is why I must not marry?" With a despondent

cry the eldest son interrupted his mother. "It is because of you people that I am not getting anywhere."

His mother said nothing. Pressing her wrinkled cheeks in her hands, she remained standing thoughtfully in the middle of the room. Then she spoke again, more to herself than to him:

"You are right, my son, you really are right; you must begin to look out for yourself some time," she said as though she were just beginning to understand what her son was driving at.

"All my life I have been working for you. First over in Poland, and then in America, until I was able to send for you, and after that too. How long is this going to go on that way? I've got to think of myself some time too. My future father-in-law has a shoe store, maybe he will take me in partnership with him. If I can't plan to be independent now, when can I do so?"

"You are right, my child, quite right," his mother nodded.

"And it will be better for you, too. As long as I am with you, you will be accustomed to having me take care of you, and I can scarcely do otherwise, either. After I've stopped living here, that will be the end of it."

"What can I do about it, since Fate has dealt so harshly with me, and it is destined that both I and my children must meet with so much misfortune? May God help you, my child!" Mother embraced her son, and pressed her pale cheek to his face.

Solomon withdrew from her arms and began packing again. Not another word was spoken.

But when he wanted to pack up his soiled linen, his mother took it out of his hand, and carried it over to the sink:

"At least let me wash your linen for the last time, my son."

. . . . . .

And hard times fell to mother's lot. In addition to the big dent which the departure of the eldest son made in Sarah Rifke's purse, Deborah now remained at home all day, because she had no work. For the first few days this change made little

difference; the grocer continued to give them food "on credit," the butcher and the baker also, and the first of the month was still pretty far distant.

But when the first did come, and the landlord entered with his well-known "Missus, . . ." when the grocer sent a message by the children, saying that he would like to speak to their mother, when the same message arrived from the baker and the butcher as well, then there really was nothing to eat in the house. Sarah Rifke lay awake all night and tried to figure out how she could make ends meet. Because of the expenses she turned once more to her tried and true cooking pots. She adjured them anew after she had rather neglected them in the new home, and had called them to her aid but rarely. The pots possessed the same magic power in the new home which they had had in the old one; their friendship for mother had not changed, and they stood by her faithfully in her hour of need....

So Sarah Rifke knew what to do about providing for her table, thanks to her good cooking pots, and to her son "Moses-leben"—who was none other than Moishele, "the Ox." He had changed his name to Sam Moses, but in order to make the foreign name easy to say, his mother added the familiar Jewish *leben* to the "German" name; and by attaching this affectionate suffix to his name she repaid her son for all the kindness which he showed her.

Moishele, "the Ox," or, as we too shall call him from now on, Sam Moses, was as mindful of his mother in America as he had been in the old home when he had begun to busy himself about the carts at the market place. Since he had gone to work for a grocer in New York he always brought something home with him. Once the package contained tea and sugar, the next time it was a half pound of the best coffee and always, he adjured his mother not to give any one else any of it, but to keep it for herself.

Sam Moses was not a regular boarder. He seldom ate at home, and came in only from time to time, every few days,

and generally when least expected. And he never appeared with empty hands, even less so now that he knew that the eldest son had left home and that Deborah was without a job. And his mother said softly to herself: "Next to God, Moses-leben is my chief source of help." She would not say this aloud, because she did not want to humiliate her husband.

So there was both difficulty and ease in the matter of obtaining food. But the greatest worry was the rent. That had been a very different matter in the old country. There one simply lived in a house, and nobody asked whether one owned it or whether it belonged to some one else. Rent—there was no question of that. If it ever did occur to a hard-hearted landlord to demand the rent, curses were heaped upon his head from all sides. And if he threatened to evict his renters, he was called "an informer." If a landlord really did dare to evict a Jew he was cursed, and that unto the tenth generation. When he died, the Burial Association, the Chewra Kadischa, would even refuse to bury him, and pallbearers had to be hired for that purpose. And his grave would be dug close to the cemetery fence, where those unfaithful to Judaism are buried.

But in America the greatest worry of the poor is the rent. When the first of the month draws near, Sarah Rifke passes sleepless nights. She worries herself ill as to where she can find the money for the rent. And when the first of the month finally arrives, the landlord with his shaven jowl and his big cigar in his mouth appears bright and early, directly after every one has left for work. He chews at his cigar and growls out the one word: "Missus. . . ." And he pounds his fist down on the collection book. If as little as one cent of the fifteen dollars is lacking, he won't accept the money, but pulls out his ponderous gold watch, and says, chewing at his cigar: "Missus, you will have time until three o'clock, that is when the court closes."

The days preceding the first of the month were marked by an atmosphere like that preceding Yom Kippur, the day of heavenly judgment. For no matter how carefully Sarah Rifke

calculated, saved and put by during the month for the rent, there were always a few dollars lacking when the first of the month came round. Sometimes the gas bill had to be paid, sometimes one of the children had been ill, sometimes a pair of shoes had to be soled. Then a family council was called. And after a good deal of noise and lamentation, the eldest son always had to lend them the few dollars they lacked to make up the full amount of the rent.

This time Sarah Rifke feared the first of the month like death. She lay awake on her bed at night, and did not know how she could get the money together for the rent. The eldest son, who did come home occasionally in the evening, had advised his mother to take a boarder, and wanted to bring one home with him. But Sam Moses declared that he would not allow "mother to be maid to a stranger."

Solomon answered that that was the way it was in America. "Every one takes in roomers."

Sam Moses answered: "That may be true a thousand times over in America, but my mother isn't going to do washing for a stranger."

To which Solomon answered that if Moses were such a good son, *he* ought to pay the rent for mother.

"Yes, and I'll do it too, out of my own wages," parried Moses. "I won't allow mother to work for strangers. For her own children, well, all right, but for strangers—never!"

Sarah Rifke said she could not expect Mosesleben to do all this, he was doing enough for his mother as it was. While speaking she embraced him, and pressed a kiss on his forehead.

Sam Moses took the fifteen dollars which he had just received as his weekly wage out of his pocketbook and gave them to his mother for the rent.

The eldest son was ashamed, and said that he had done enough for the family. "Now let the others do their share."

His mother answered that she expected nothing at all from him, God forbid that she should; she knew very well that he

had to consider himself. "You are already at the age to be married, and must finally begin to make plans for it."

No one said anything.

So the problem of paying the rent was solved for Sarah Rifke this time; but she exchanged this problem for a new one, the Feast of the Passover.

Sarah Rifke always feared for the Jewish holidays. She knew how to cope with the exigencies of everyday life. But now that a holiday which brings joy to all was approaching, Sarah Rifke alone was afraid of it. So now she had something new to worry about at night. She said nothing to her husband about this. "He works so hard all day, poor man, let him have some sleep at night, anyhow." She was careful, for that reason, not to sigh so loudly at night as to waken Ansel. But Ansel heard her soft sighs too, and they cut him to the heart. He asked:

"Why are you sighing again, Sarah Rifke? The rent is all paid up now."

"Such important holidays are approaching, and I really don't know how I am going to get everything ready for them," answered Sarah Rifke.

"You always have something to sigh about, something to worry about. If it isn't the rent, it's the holidays," said Ansel reproachfully, as though Sarah Rifke had chosen these worries of her own accord.

"You are right, dear husband, you are right," Sarah Rifke admitted.

And yet, although Ansel was right, Sarah Rifke sighed and worried in spite of it all.

Sam Moses had provided the matsos and other groceries for the holidays. His boss stocked these things in his store, and so Moses brought them home. When the holidays were drawing nearer the eldest son thawed out a little too. One evening he came home for "a dish of dumplings." He said that no dumplings tasted so good to him as mother's. While he was eating Sarah Rifke's dumplings, he began:

"Mother, the holidays will soon be here. I won't be at home

for the first evening of the Passover, but I do want my few dollars to be there at any rate." He pulled out a ten-dollar bill, and gave it to his mother.

"If you aren't going to be at home for the first evening of the Passover, I don't want your money either. It will be our first Passover in the new world, and I want to see all my children together at that time."

"You are right, mother, but I have promised my bride to spend the first Eve of the Passover at her parents' home."

"So I must play second fiddle?"—his mother pouted. "I bore you and raised you, so I have the prior right. Bring your fiancée home to us for the first evening of the Passover, and go to your father-in-law's house for the second evening. Or, is it because God has punished us, and we are 'greenhorns'?" Sarah Rifke did not understand the meaning of the word, but she took it that poor people were called 'greenhorns.' "So that is why you are ashamed to have us know your fiancée?"

Embarrassed, the son stood there in front of his mother; he felt that she was right, and did not speak.

"I don't even know how your future wife looks. You are ashamed of us, my child," said Sarah Rifke, and wiped the tears from her eyes with her apron.

The eldest son sank into a reverie; maybe his mother was right, maybe it would be a good thing to bring his fiancée home for the first evening of the Passover!

But when he looked round in the basement apartment, and perceived its poverty, saw the broken, ugly chairs, and the miserable beds, he made up his mind: "No, it won't do!"

"I'll go to my father-in-law's on the first evening of the Passover with father," he said, and in order to make it up with his mother, he drew forth another five-dollar bill. "Here, buy something for the children to wear," he added and hurried away.

When Ansel came back in the evening, Sarah Rifke told him that the eldest son had been home, had left them fifteen dollars for the holidays, and added that he wanted to introduce

his parents to his parents-in-law on the first evening of the Passover. When Ansel heard that, he became so furious that he called Sarah Rifke a whole menagerie of names.

"Cow, horse, sheep! And did you accept the fifteen dollars from that cobbler's apprentice? And for that he wants to introduce us to his shoemakers on the Passover, to his parents-in-law. What? He is going to drag me, the Reader of Scriptures, Ansel, to him, the shoemaker, as though I were a beggar? And you, you goose, you donkey, agreed to that, and accepted his fifteen dollars. May he lie ill, the shoemaker's apprentice, until such time as I will consent to such a proposition! If he wants me to become acquainted with his shoemakers, his parents-in-law, they will have to come here to Ansel in his basement!"

Sarah Rifke realized that her husband was right, so she did not dare to contradict him, but nodded her head. "You are right, dear husband, you are right."

"I adjure you by all the Holy Laws of Moses not to touch his fifteen dollars! They are to be unclean for you, unclean and forbidden, do you hear?" shouted Ansel.

"I hear you...." Sarah Rifke nodded her head meekly.

"No, no, give them to me. I am afraid that you will spend them...." Ansel became even more insistent.

"But I promise you that I won't touch them; they are to be unclean and forbidden for me; do you believe me now?" said Sarah Rifke.

"And you are to throw them in his face, do you hear? In his face"—Ansel pounded on the table with his fist.

Sarah Rifke stood before Ansel, intimidated and meek. But pride and joy in him filled her heart.

"How am I to know what to do?"—with these words Sarah Rifke took the blame on herself. "My troubles are to blame for everything"—she justified herself.

CHAPTER XVII

The First Passover in the Land of the Free

When the eldest son came back to his mother several days later, toward evening, in order to get another "dish of dumplings" (this time not quite so hesitantly in view of the fifteen dollars which he had contributed), Ansel was sitting at the table, wearing his cap but not his coat. His face was buried in his newspaper. Sarah Rifke placed a plate of dumplings before her son—dumplings covered with a rich sauce, as he liked to have them. When he had tasted the first one, he asked: "Well, mother, have you prepared everything for the holidays?"

His mother did not answer.

Ansel buried his head deeper down in his newspaper.

"I have told my father-in-law that I am going to bring you with me during the holidays, in order to introduce you," Solomon went on as he ate his dumplings.

Again mother said nothing. Ansel's newspaper rustled loudly, as he turned its pages impatiently.

"And you still haven't found a job?" Solomon turned toward Deborah who was sitting near the gas jet, sewing. "You would like to work in a union shop, wouldn't you? Well, has the 'union' found any job for you? Why doesn't it provide one for you?" the eldest son said mockingly, as he chewed away at his dumplings.

Then Ansel appeared unexpectedly from behind his newspaper, smoothed his mustache with two fingers, and grasped his beard with the rest of his hand, just as he used to do in the

good old days in Poland, but had not done for a long time in America. Then he began to talk:

"And I think that she is quite right not to want to work in such a miserable shop."

The fork with its little dumpling stopped short at the eldest son's lips; he looked at his father in amazement.

"We workers..." Ansel began, as he pointed his finger at himself.

His son opened his eyes wide.

"What, father, have you become a union man?"

"Of course, do you think I am going to depend on you? You sold me to a boss, so that I might be his slave."

The eldest son looked at his father in surprise. Ansel called to his wife encouragingly:

"Sarah, why don't you speak?"

At that Sarah walked over to the corner, drew the fifteen dollars out of a dish, and placed them in front of her eldest son, next to his plate of dumplings.

"What's that?" asked her son.

"We don't want any money from big business men. We don't need it," answered Ansel for the mother, and withdrew behind his newspaper again.

The son looked at his mother, looked at the newspaper behind which his father was buried, and did not know what had happened.

"My dear child, I will tell you all about it," said Sarah Rifke. "We may be poor people, but you have no reason to be ashamed of us. If you are ashamed of us, we don't need your money. God will help us without your money." His mother folded her arms.

"Understand this"—Ansel's head appeared from behind his newspaper again—"understand this; I know exactly who I am. I may be a poor man, a 'greenhorn,' a working man; but who these cobblers of yours are, that is something I have yet to discover." Father's face disappeared behind his newspaper again.

His son stopped eating; he pushed his plate aside, and said in a bewildered way, half to himself:

"Now what am I supposed to do? I have told my fiancée and my mother-in-law that I am going to bring you along on the first evening of the Passover. They are counting on you; how will it look?"

Ansel put his newspaper aside.

"You want to take us along? To them, to your shoemakers? What? Do you think that just because we are in reduced circumstances, because we are greenhorns—do you think, do you believe, that you can make fools of us? I am an honest workingman"—Ansel suddenly became proud of his status as a workingman, at which not only his eldest son, but also his wife marveled—"I earn my bread honestly, by the sweat of my brow, as it is commanded in the Torah. And who are these shoemakers of yours? Just tell me this, does your father-in-law know Hebrew? Does he know his prayers? Does he know how to conduct the Reading of the Scriptures? So I and your mother are supposed to pay a visit to your cobblers' folks! If your cobbler wants to make the acquaintance of your parents, let him come here to the basement to meet Reb Ansel, the Reader of Scripture. He isn't crippled, is he?"

The son became frightened at his father's words; for the first time since his arrival in America, Ansel was once more the old Ansel. Solomon said nothing. He merely looked round the room and noted the sheer poverty which pervaded it; and while he wondered how he could bring his fiancée and his parents-in-law to this basement dwelling, he began to feel sorry for himself, and to wail:

"By my blood and sweat I have been able to put aside a few hundred dollars so that I might be married. Do you think I ought to furnish the basement with this money? Where would I get the money with which to be married?"

"Who is asking you for it? Who is asking you to do anything at all?" asks father, who is calming down a little.

Mother wanted to make peace; she was sorry for her son.

"Who needs new furniture? You tell them that we haven't been in this country very long. We are 'greenhorns.'"

"Oh, well, is the furniture as important as all that? Must one have furniture in order to be a respectable person?"—father, too, became more friendly.

In despair, the eldest son sat there and considered what he ought to do. Meanwhile Sam Moses came home, and as always brought a package for mother; he beckoned her into a corner, and gave her a pound of cookies which he had brought home with him from the store.

"Here, mother, put these by, so that you may have them for a treat."

His mother examined the contents of the package, and when she saw the cookies, she cried out:

"Stupid child, what do I need these for? I'll save them to serve to the fiancée."

"What fiancée?"

"Shloime is bringing his fiancée to our house on the first evening of the Passover," said mother in a voice loud enough for Solomon to hear; she wanted to make compensation for having vexed him.

"Bring her here? Into the basement? Just look round, and see how it looks here!" said the eldest son, half to himself.

"How does it look? I'll sweep out the rooms, I'll strew fresh sand, put a handsome cloth on the table, and set out the brass candle-sticks; just wait and see, my son, you won't have to be ashamed of us! Deborah is home, she will help me."

"For all I care she can feel ashamed. This basement is our home. This is the way your parents are living," Ansel began all over again; "into this home she must come, if she wants to be our daughter-in-law."

As always, it was Sam Moses who saw the practical side of things; he looked round him in the basement, and decided: "He can't bring his fiancée to this place."

"Then what are you going to do?" asked his mother; father retreated behind his newspaper again.

"We are going to furnish this basement decently, buy a table, chairs, new dishes, knives and forks. On what will you serve food to the bride? On the two broken plates which you own now?"

"He is right, my child," said Sarah Rifke in a low tone to her eldest son, as though she were reproaching herself.

Solomon said nothing further. But Ansel, in his turn, put his head out from behind his newspaper, and put in a word:

"Well, well, there we have my second jewel of a son!"

"He is right, all the same," said Sarah Rifke to Ansel.

"Just see how father abuses the shoemakers!" The eldest son has regained his courage. "You are a workingman yourself, unless I am greatly mistaken, so why do you abuse the shoemakers like that?" he asked his father.

"I am a workingman, but no boss," replied Ansel proudly.

"Do stop that quarreling, we've got to come to a decision," called Sarah Rifke. "Well, my son, you tell us what we ought to do," she turned to Sam Moses, her only rescuing angel.

The red-haired youth thought things over for a while. Then he scratched his red head and turned to his brother:

"Solomon, if you are going to bring your fiancée here for the first evening of the Passover, make up your mind to spend a dollar a week in preparation for the event; I'll donate a dollar too, and for two dollars a week we can furnish the basement like a king's palace." He had learned this phrase from the street-vendors with whom he dealt. "We'll buy furniture, dishes, spoons, everything we need, on the installment plan. I know a place where I can get it. My boss has a friend in that kind of business, we'll get it, all right."

Ansel had buried his face so deeply in his newspaper that one could see neither hide nor hair of him. Tears came to mother's eyes.

Shloime sighed deeply and answered: "If you can get it on these terms, I'll be willing to pay a dollar a week; but for how long?"

"Don't worry, within six months we'll have completed the payments, and mother will be living like a human being; isn't that so?"

Solomon sighed deeply once more and nodded as a sign of consent.

But, after the problem of furnishing the basement had been solved, even greater worries presented themselves.

It was discovered that father owned nothing fit to wear on the first evening of the Passover, and that mother needed a new dress; in addition the youngest boys really ought to have new shirts and breeches and new caps. How could they sit down to the Feast of the Passover without caps? Then there was the matter of preparing everything for the holiday festivity, meat, fish and everything else. Sarah Rifke was in despair, and in her bewilderment she turned to Mosesleben, her rock of salvation.

"Better let things as they are, my child, my poverty is so great that nothing can be done about it."

But Sam Moses, who knew a way out of every difficulty, turned to his brother.

"You want to bring your bride here for the first evening of the Passover, and I should like to have you do so. Well, if you will give mother money to buy shirts and breeches for the boys, I'll furnish meat, fish and everything else needed for the meal; and if you'll buy a new coat for father, I'll bring home material so that mother may have a new dress; Deborah can make it."

To console her eldest son a little, mother added:

"By doing this, you will, God grant, provide us all with outfits for your wedding, and you won't have to buy us any more new clothes."

The word "wedding" sounded sweet in Solomon's ears, and with a sigh he declared that he was willing to agree to his brother's suggestions.

. . . . . .

The Feast of the Passover had always been a happy season in Ansel's family; that had been true in the old home, and it proved to be equally so in the new one—namely, that the star of the Passover proved to be a happy one for Ansel's family. It was Sarah Rifke's good fortune to be able to celebrate a real Feast of the Passover in this new country. She did not have to be ashamed before God or man, as she had feared she might, during her long, sleepless nights. New furniture and new clothing had been purchased, Shloime's fiancée sat at a table upon which a cut-glass dish sparkled—a dish which Sam Moses had brought home at the last moment, just before the first evening of the Passover, so that his brother's fiancée might have a feast for the eyes. When the time came for the Passover Eve meal—at which the fiancée was present—the basement shone and sparkled; at the head of the table sat Ansel in a frock coat which was "like new," purchased for him by his son. After the reading of the Haggadah, the story of the wonderful flight of the race of Israel out of Egypt, and just as Sarah Rifke, wearing the new calico dress for which Sam Moses had bought the material, and which Deborah had made, brought in the soup with dumplings, Ansel turned to address his family as follows:

"What a remarkable thing it is—all that happens when I am sitting at my sewing at the shop. All kinds of thoughts come to mind at that time, memories of days gone by, of the old home, and such matters. But, most of all, I think of this: 'How is it that I, a Jew, a Scripture Reader in the old home, and so, of course, in spite of everything a scholar, how is it that I should be sitting in a room with Gentile wenches and doing a woman's work, sewing shirts?' When I think this over thoroughly—and while one is busy sewing is a splendid time to think things over—it seems to me that I have developed into an entirely different Ansel, a better, more admirable, more honest Ansel, who serves God more honestly than formerly in the old home.

"Because, who was I after all, in the old home? An idler

who did nothing except go walking in the market place.... But when I am sewing a shirt here, I know that some one is going to wear it. So I know that my work is of use to some one, that I am a useful member of society. I am not eating bread which I have not earned. Then I praise God and give thanks that he made a workingman of me. Oh, it isn't so simple a matter, this sewing shirts, it's a great thing; all one needs to do is just to give the idea thoughtful consideration!"

None of them said anything. The eldest son, who sat next to his fiancée, and who had boasted to his future parents-in-law that his father, Ansel, was a "Reverend," now that he heard his father's remarks was unable to look his fiancée in the face, he was so ashamed.

CHAPTER XVIII

A New Circle of Friends

Deborah had not yet found a job in a union shop, and Joine Gedalie was not yet attending a Talmudic academy, where he would learn to be a Rabbi, "in the American manner." Both remained idly at home, to their mother's great regret. Actually both of them earned enough to supply their own needs, and they brought their money home. Joine Gedalie had a route on a morning paper and earned a few dollars every week that way, which he turned over to his mother. Deborah was famous for her nimble fingers, and she could copy anything that was put before her. Every day she came home with some kind of work or other. Sometimes she arrived with hair which she fashioned into marriage-wigs, the next day she brought a dress to be made over for a neighbor or the wife of some Polish immigrant. She did all the mending for the family, she made shirts and breeches for the little boys. Now and then she found a piece of inexpensive material somewhere, and made a dress out of it for her mother or for herself. But she did not have a steady job, and her mother couldn't count on paying any household bills with the money which Deborah earned.

However, both brother and sister put in much of their time perfecting themselves in English. Joine Gedalie had discovered an evening school, and attended every evening with his sister to study English there.

The evening school was housed in a regular public-school building. It was attended by representatives of many nations: Italians, Poles, Hungarians, but most of all by young Jewish people. A pleasant atmosphere pervaded the school-room, and

Deborah felt at home in the evening school. The teacher, Miss Forster, created this friendly atmosphere in the course, and made them all feel as though they were one family.

Miss Forster had been an immigrant child. Although she had been in America for a long time, her education was that of an immigrant. As in a dream, she remembered the broad green steppes with the rare, slender birch trees which were scattered about on the fields of her childhood home; as in a dream she recalled her trip to America, beginning with the crossing of the border, the long railroad ride, the harbor, and the ship in which they had made the voyage. Although her parents belonged to the intelligentsia, they had experienced the same lean, trying years of all the early emigrants to America—they had sewed pants in sweat-shops, they had taken home piecework at which they had labored night after night, with the entire family sitting about the gas jet in the kitchen. They had taken in boarders—everything, anything, just so that the children might have a good education.

It was by means of the hallowed sacrifices of hard work that Miss Forster's parents had succeeded in making something of their children, and Miss Isabel, who was one of many daughters, had completed a course at a teachers' college. Her youthful experiences had had a great influence on Miss Forster's character. They imbued her entire personality with that buoyancy and real American carefree spirit which are typical of the self-assured.

Her early environment aroused deep sympathy for the young immigrants in Miss Forster's heart; she loved them, and liked to work with them. A radical at heart, she felt far more at home among the "greenhorn students" who came from revolutionary Russia than she did among the American girls, who, though well brought up superficially, were, nevertheless, shallow at heart. She had a large circle of acquaintances among the immigrants, and liked to associate with the "green" girls who attended her evening school.

Miss Forster became interested in Deborah through Joine

Gedalie, whose unusual ability had come to her notice. Deborah's appearance, her small, helpless but arresting personality, her black curly hair and the big questioning eyes which were always a little fearful, her serious and yet sad spirit attracted the vivacious and rather frivolous teacher to the foreign immigrant girl, and after they had met a few times they became fast friends. When Miss Forster found out about Deborah's financial status, she became even more interested in her, and introduced her to the Salkind sisters.

The Salkind sisters were "greenhorns" too, and, like Deborah, they were studying English at evening school with Miss Forster. Deborah had noticed them long ago, because of their striking clothes. Their colorful dresses, their gay peasant kerchiefs and the Turkish shawls which they wore were bound to attract attention.

Rose Salkind, the elder of the two sisters, was a mature girl with big brown eyes and heavy black hair which she wore in two braids around her head. Although her face was no longer youthful, she still had something so sympathetic and reminiscent of the old home in her facial expression that it seemed to Deborah that she must have met this girl before. Rose Salkind inveigled Deborah into a lengthy conversation at their very first meeting.

"Where do you come from?" she asked Deborah after the teacher had introduced them.

"From Poland."

"Why, then we are compatriots. We come from Poland too. So you are going to school in your old age too?"

"I haven't any job, so I have plenty of time and can take up English."

"What is your trade?"

"I am a seamstress."

"Really? Then we are in the same line!"

The girl's face had an ingenuous expression which encouraged the usually reserved Deborah to talk.

"Can't you get her a job? I know you can," said Miss Isabel to Rose Salkind, in her peculiar Yiddish.

"I'll ask mother about it," answered Rose, "maybe we can work out something."

"Do, I beg of you!" said Miss Isabel, and left the girls by themselves so that they might become better acquainted.

When Deborah came to school the next day she was greeted by Rose like an old friend.

"Have you found a job yet?"

"No," answered Deborah; "it is very hard to get work."

"Do you know—come and work with us! I talked with my mother about you. We do work for private customers, we can give you some work to do."

Deborah looked at her gratefully.

"We don't live very far from here, right near Avenue E, remember the address!"

With glowing cheeks and shining eyes Deborah returned home. Her curls danced all over her face with pride.

"Mother," she called out, "I have a job. I'm going to begin work tomorrow."

"God grant that you may keep it for many years"—her mother, who was just washing dishes, gave utterance to a pious blessing.

The next morning Deborah went to her new work. In the "parlor" there were several sewing machines, at which the girls sat sewing.

Deborah was greeted by a good-natured, fat woman, to whom Rose introduced her.

"See, mother, that is our new assistant. Her name is Deborah, and she comes from Poland."

"So? From which town do you come, my child?" asked the mother.

"From Gostynin."

"An aunt of mine lived there at one time. She was a very pious woman. I suppose she's dead by now, may she rest in peace."

"Do go on asking questions, mother, do go on asking questions; the first thing you know we will be related to one another."

This shop was quite a different matter from the one in which Deborah had worked before. It wasn't an "American" shop, but an establishment like those in Poland. The girls made dresses for private customers, mostly for their own former compatriots, who had come from Warsaw, and whom they had known back home. No one was hurried. They sang at their work, and the mother, who was forever cooking something, brought treats to the workroom from time to time, "to cheer them up." Now it was fruit, now a bit of baking, now a piece of sweet gingerbread, which she brought home, and then she said in her cozy way:

"Children—I bought apples that look just like the apples back home, it's a pleasure to see them! There, try them!"

And sometimes she brought up a plate of soup in the middle of the day.

"Long life and good health to you, my children, and you'll have to have a taste of my soup! I'm cooking a soup that's actually fit for a king."

And when she did this, the mother never drew any distinction between her own girls and the stranger.

In the afternoon a young man appeared, rather heavy-set, with short legs, and wearing a suit that was too short and too tight, and which threatened to burst at the seams at any moment. The girls introduced him to Deborah as a compatriot of theirs. The young man sat down beside the girls and pulled a box of chocolates out of his pockets; he divided the chocolates up with them on condition that he was to be allowed to drop each piece in the girls' mouths himself. After this procedure was finished, he began to pull the piece of silk with which the younger sister was working out of her lap, and to play with her hands, until she said that she had a headache, and put her work aside.

"Mother, mother, Bontschik is keeping us from our work again," called the older girl, jokingly.

"Bontschikleben, do let them work. The lady needs the dress to take with her to a summer resort. She's coming to try it on very soon," said the mother, and stroked Bontschik's fat jowls.

"Dear Granny, I brought you a drop of whiskey, and you'll never get anything like this in Poland; it comes from the Roumanian restaurant," Bontschik cried out, as he drew a bottle out of his pocket.

"But, but, Bontschik! You know I can't drink. If I take as much as one little nip at it, my heart is affected." The mother took the bottle and went into the next room with it; Bontschik continued to tease the girls.

A new life began for Deborah—a life which had lain dormant within her though she had not been conscious of it in any way. The Salkind sisters dressed with taste and originality. The younger of them, Bronia, merely had to drape a length of flowered or checked fabric about her slender body, and a new model was automatically created. Often the sisters went to the booths in the Italian quarter, bought a remnant of Italian silk or a Turkish shawl and made dresses, coats or suits out of it; they wore multi-colored strings of beads which accentuated the gypsy-like appearance of these dark-skinned girls. Deborah acquired all of these tricks with ease; it seemed to be innate within her. Without overmuch deliberation she copied the girls; she, too, dressed up in gay fabrics, which were eminently suited to her graceful figure, her narrow, sloping shoulders, and the black curls which were as rebelliously unmanageable now as they had been when she was a child; they still fell over her forehead, cheeks and ears in a turbulent mass. Deborah began to pass more time before her mirror, and—wonder of wonders—she began to groom her fingernails as she had seen the Salkind sisters groom theirs, and she manicured them carefully, although for the present she preferred to do it in secret.

In this new environment she soon forgot her old home; the summer evenings and the Holy Cause faded into a blurred

distance; a yoke fell from her shoulders, and her whole spirit seemed freed, as though she had been relieved of a burden.

She continued to feel more and more at ease at the Salkinds', and finally she was more at home there than in the basement apartment.

Their mode of life, so pleasant in its own peculiar way, pleased her, as did the singing and the merry conversation during working hours, and the mother, herself still a child in spirit, and ready to enter into all the pleasures of her children and the young people who came and went in the house.

In addition to Bontschik, who seemed to have a good deal of money (when they all went out he paid for everything), there were many other young people who were friends of the family. The Salkinds had many friends among their countrymen, and the young men liked to visit at their house; whether it was the girls or the mother's good cooking that attracted them was not quite clear. So there was always merriment and good cheer to be found at the Salkinds'. The mother liked nothing better than to cook and bake if she only had something to cook with, and some one to cook for. The young people who came to visit brought all kinds of goodies with them, and many of them stayed for meals—not as regular guests, to be sure, but if they wanted to eat a bit of home-cooked *gefüllte fisch* or a good bortsch on Friday evening, or a rich dumpling on the Sabbath-day, they came to Salkinds'. When the holidays arrived, the visitors put their resources together and gave money to mother Salkind so that she might prepare the festive dishes. Old Mrs. Salkind loved this kind of life. Cooking and baking were a passion with her; if only she had enough money, and some one to eat the proofs of her culinary art, she absolutely radiated joy; she stayed up half the night kneading dough, making buttercakes like those at home, filling goose necks and preparing other toothsome dishes.

In addition to Bontschik there was another young man who frequented the house, and who felt very much at home at the Salkinds'. He was an official of a union, heavy-set, and with a

little paunch; he could sing, and his name was Silbermann. He sang a great variety of operatic arias, and the new hits from the Jewish operettas for the girls. Silbermann had a strong agreeable voice; and he had at one time been a labor agitator, and had gone about giving talks—so that now he still shouted down every one else in conversation. But even stronger than his voice were his hands. Those opponents whom he could not convince with his voice, he convinced with his hands.

Another one of the regular visitors was a young man who was jokingly referred to as "Mischa Elman"; his real name was Sascha Kohn. He was first violinist with a little orchestra, and occasionally appeared at a charity concert. His whole ambition was to study at the Conservatory, but he had no money. "Mischa Elman" came from Russia; he had become acquainted with the Salkinds through Silbermann, who was a close friend of his. So the evenings at the Salkinds' were somewhat devoted to music and recitations of poetry, but even more time was given over to discussions, and it was a member of this same group, a young poet named Freier, who finally introduced Deborah to Buchholz.

CHAPTER XIX

A Meeting

One morning when Deborah was about to start out for work as usual, she met Freier. He walked up and down in front of the house, his cigarette in his mouth, his collar turned up in spite of the oppressive heat.

"What are you doing here?"

"I am waiting for you."

"For me?"

"Yes, I want to lure you away from your work, come on, take a ride with me."

"Go out for a ride now? Just for fun? In bright daylight, early in the morning?"

"When should we go, perhaps, at midnight? It's a steaming day. Let's go! Honestly, it will be fun."

Deborah was embarrassed; such a thing would never have occurred to her, and she would never have thought of going out for a pleasure excursion during the day, when every one was working.

"Are you afraid? Of whom?"

"I am not afraid, but I am not used to that."

"Then you will get used to it."

"Really, I don't know what to say." Embarrassed, Deborah stood there.

"In America every one is afraid of starvation. In the old home in Poland it was no disgrace to go hungry. Hunger was a personal matter, and every one had a right to indulge in it. Here in America we are forbidden to go hungry, every one is afraid of it, both the rich and the poor. Capitalists and labor-

ers all tremble at the thought of starvation. Take myself, for example: What have I, in Heaven's name, to lose, would you think? Who has a better right to go hungry than a poet? But in America even the poets are not allowed to go hungry; and no matter how hard I try to starve, I am not permitted to do so, I must work."

"You work?"

"Because I do not want to work with my pen, I work with my hands."

"At what?"

"What difference does that make? Whatever happens to come along. But sometimes I do rebel against it, when His Majesty the Poet awakens within me, with his God-given right to starvation. Then, when I am sitting at my work, the longing for hunger comes upon me, and I yearn for it as a hungry man yearns for food. I dream of hunger at night. Hunger is the only ray of light in my life. Oh, if you only knew how I long for it! And suddenly there arises within me the strength of a spiritual Samson, consumed with the longing for hunger. When that happens I roam about the streets for a few days, and I satiate myself with hunger. I feast on hunger with all my being, so that I may live on its memory during my days of satiety. But how rarely this happens! My days of hunger are numbered, and recently they have become rarer and rarer. That is a sign of senility. Look, today is a day of hunger again. That is why I am so happy."

Deborah scrutinized him closely. She saw a look of sadness in his eyes which she had not noticed before; his mouth was distorted as though he were weeping in his soul. She had quite decided to accompany him wherever he might want to go.

"But why don't you go hungry?"

"Why don't I go hungry? Because he won't let me go hungry!" Freier shouted.

"Who won't let you go hungry?"

"That unendurable scamp, my conscience."

"Your conscience?"

"Yes, because of my wife and children."

"You are married?"

"Since the day I was born."

Deborah stared at him in surprise.

"First to my parents, then to my wife and children. I can't even remember when I was single."

Deborah said nothing.

"Why don't you say anything? Why are you afraid of me? Maybe because I have a wife and children?"

"No," Deborah laughed: "Why should I be afraid?"

"I knew that you wouldn't be afraid. The first time I saw you I thought to myself—there now, there is a member for our Club, which, up to this time, has included three members—my humble self, the sculptor Buchholz—oh, you haven't met Buchholz! Just a minute, do you know what? We'll go and fetch him right now. He lives in a studio on Fourteenth Street. Do you want to do that? We'll be passing by there anyhow."

"Later. Now tell me about your Club."

"Oh yes, the third member, he is an original—a tailor, a commonplace tailor, but an interesting person. You must become acquainted with him. An artist in his line. His hands are worth their weight in gold, but he has a habit of sewing the buttons to the wrong side of the garment. You think, perhaps, that he does this by accident? Oh no, he does it intentionally. He says that every human being ought to regard his free will as a sacred heritage, and must exercise it at every opportunity. 'If you'—so he says—'tell me to sew on buttons, and I don't want to do it, but am nevertheless compelled to do so, then I always sew the buttons to the wrong side of the garment, because that is what I want to do. I won't do anything for you in the way that you want it done; I've got to sew, of course, because if I don't sew I can't eat; but I want to sew the buttons to the wrong side.' Of course he's always being thrown out bodily. He won't join a union, because he used to be an anarchist. 'A union,' says he, 'is like a police permit for prostitution.' So he runs round without work for a few weeks, and

starves until he finds a new job. And then the same thing happens again. He finishes a suit, it is a work of art—but the buttons are on the wrong side. Do you like the tailor?"

"What's the matter with you today, Freier?"

"Oh so, you probably think the tailor is a creative creature of my imagination? He really exists; if you like, I'll introduce him to you."

"Why are you so sad? What has happened to you?" Deborah asked sympathetically.

"Today is my day for going hungry, that is all—and you, by the way, are the cause of it."

"I?"

"Yes. You have reawakened a dream which I had half-forgotten."

Deborah walked along beside Freier silently, with bent head.

"Well, aren't you curious to know about the dream which you have awakened in me?" asked Freier.

Deborah continued to say nothing.

"I have always cherished the dream that the time would come when I might cast everything aside, and wander forth out into the world with a barrel-organ, the way that the organ-grinders do in Poland. Naturally, it would have to be in jolly company, with good friends. Buchholz is to be one of these good friends. He is to lead a little monkey on a leash, and the monkey will do tricks, as it sits up on his shoulder. I am to be head hurdy-gurdy man, the one who grinds the organ. All that has been lacking was a pretty dancer, a dancer who would make the whole expedition worth while; I have been on the lookout for her constantly, but I had never found her. The dream had already begun to fade, and I had begun to calm down. Then, suddenly, you appeared out of the darkness, and brought the dream to life once more. Now, do you understand what ails me today?"

Deborah became sad, wrinkled her little forehead, and never said a word.

"Why do you frown so?"

Deborah did not answer for a long time, then she began:

"I'll tell you why, Freier. What you said makes me feel sad."

"Why?"

"Because you tell me things which do not apply to me."

"What do you mean by that?"

"What you say has nothing to do with me. Your words might apply to any girl who was walking beside you at the moment."

"Why does that make you feel so troubled?"

"I don't know why, but I do feel that way."

Now Freier was silent too; in silence, they arrived at Fourteenth Street. Freier led Deborah into the dark hallway of an old house.

"Wait here for me, I'll go to fetch my friend Buchholz."

"No, Freier, you'd better let me go back to work; I am very late as it is."

"Why? I thought you had consented to go to the park with us."

"I did at first, but I am sorry that I did so."

"Being sorry isn't nice."

"I know that, but I can't help it."

"And if I promise you not to mention the dream any more?"

"I feel depressed enough as it is," said Deborah, half to herself.

"I beg of you, do stay! I give you my word of honor that I won't mention the silly, meaningless dream any more"—Freier pleaded like a child.

Deborah began to laugh.

"It's all right again, isn't it?"

Deborah nodded.

"But now, don't you run away; I'll be back again directly."

Freier disappeared into the dark hallway and climbed a spiral stairway which seemed to lead into a labyrinth.

When Deborah was left alone, she thought, for a moment,

that she would go back to work. The fear of losing a day no longer worried her; but Freier's words did not seem quite sincere to her; yet his personality awakened her sympathy. She felt that he was suffering; and his suffering excused his lack of sincerity, and caused Deborah to wait for him at the door, although it was a long time before he returned.

"You must forgive me for keeping you waiting so long. Do you think it is an easy matter to get up to Buchholz's place? One has to climb about on ladders for blocks till one finally reaches his 'apartment.' He lives right next to the sky," called Freier, as he ran down the last flight of stairs.

Before Deborah there stood a man who resembled a Colossus; a giant, powerful, awkward, as though carved of oak. Broad shoulders, big, long hands. He gave the impression of a man who can do heavy manual labor, but no mental work. But there was something tender, something absolutely child-like, in the way he crinkled up his eyes. This was most noticeable when he laughed. And he laughed all the time, with and without reason. His eyes vanished beneath the eyelids, and he looked helpless and innocent.

"Buchholz, make a bow, devil take you! Why do you stand there like a bear?"

Laughing, Buchholz made a bow.

"It's been three days since he has seen any sunlight, for he has been lying about in his room, half-asleep, or prowling about without a stitch on him."

Buchholz laughed:

"That was fine."

"What was fine?"

"That."

"Yes, and that," remarked Freier, with a laugh, "more than that you'll never get out of him."

"What do you want the gentleman to do, anyway?" Deborah rushed to the defense of the stranger.

Not until they reached the street could she see him dis-

tinctly. The most striking thing about Buchholz was his shirt. It was a work shirt of an indeterminate dark shade; it hung down on the outside of his roomy trousers; and its cuffs repeatedly protruded from beneath the short sleeves of his coat. Neither trousers, nor coat, nor shirt, boasted buttons. The gape at the neckline of the shirt revealed a patch of hairy chest. Round his throat, which stood in great need of a thorough going-over with soap and water, was wound a kind of cravat, which also served as a collar. His face had obviously not been shaved for several days, his hair was disheveled and flecked with feathers, as though the man had just been drawn out of a featherbed.

"Buchholz, do tuck your shirt down into your trousers! Honestly it is a disgrace to be seen with you," Freier reprimanded him.

Deborah hid Buchholz's gigantic hulk as best she could with her little person; she walked beside him as though she wanted to protect him.

"That doesn't matter." Buchholz smiled good-naturedly, and stopped in the middle of the street to tuck in his shirt-tails.

"Well now, where are we going?" Freier began.

"I thought you wanted to go to the Bronx."

"Yes, yes," Buchholz nodded vigorously.

"You've got to have money for street-car fare in order to get there. Buchholz, have you any money?"

The giant blushed, and began to fumble in the pockets of his wide trousers.

"I have no money with me."

"With you, that's a good one! Have you any money anywhere else?"

"I have twenty-five cents with me, will that be enough?" asked Deborah.

"It will be enough for one way. But how about getting back? There are three of us"—calculated Freier.

"I'll walk."

Deborah stared at Buchholz.

"I always do that."

Without worrying about how they were going to get money for the return trip, they boarded a subway which took them to the Bronx.

CHAPTER XX

A Day in the Open

The trains from the Bronx to the city were jammed full of miserable people at this hour of day. But the trains going in the opposite direction were empty, and there wasn't a soul in the car which the three pleasure-seekers entered. After all, who ever goes to the Bronx in the morning? Pleasures of this kind are for idlers only. They felt quite at ease in the empty car, for they could converse there undisturbed.

Freier, for some reason or other, told Deborah all he knew about Buchholz; and his way of telling it wasn't very kind.

But the more dreadful the reports which she heard regarding the big ungainly youth, the greater was her sympathy for him. She felt the urge to defend this young giant, of protecting him from Freier's mocking malicious remarks. From Freier she learned that Buchholz was the son of a butcher, and had been destined to go into the same business himself, but that even as a child he had displayed an inclination for drawing, and for modeling figures out of bread. His father had half-killed him for this. But Buchholz clung to his decision, and one day he stole money from his father's till and ran off to America. Here he accepted any job which offered itself, and had a try at many kinds of work, from porter to night-watchman. In the evening he went to art school. He had found an attic room in an old house, where he lived in poverty and did his sculpturing. Since he had no money with which to hire a model he served as his own model. In his "studio" he ran round all day without clothes and made sketches, using his own figure as a model. "Now he is modeling a Samson in clay,"

Freier concluded his report, "but the figure looks as much like Samson as I look like Delilah; doesn't it, Buchholz?"

"That's not true," Buchholz laughed. "It's so hot, that's the reason I go round undressed."

"Why are you ashamed of it, fool?"

"I am not ashamed of it."

"When he is hungry, he crawls out of his attic room, and goes out to hunt work," Freier continued, as though Buchholz were not present, "he takes any job that comes along, sometimes with a transfer company, sometimes in a shoe store; or he turns the wringer in a small laundry on the East Side, or acts as crier on Broadway for the busses that take passengers to Coney Island. In that way he earns a few dollars for rent and food; then he carries a sack of clay home across his shoulders, and goes on with his modeling in the attic. No one sees his sculptures, because he is ashamed to show them. He can scarcely read or write; he never picks up a book, he never goes to a museum, he doesn't know what an art exhibit is, he has never seen anything of the work of modern sculptors or the new tendencies in art, nothing of Rodin, nothing of expressionism—"

"That's not so, I have seen"—Buchholz shook his big head.

"What have you seen?" asked Freier.

"The skyscrapers," Buchholz laughed.

It was one of those days in New York when sun and wind unite in creating a day of enchantment for humanity. Though it was midsummer, and burning heat lay on the ground, the houses, the streets, the bridges and humanity itself, a cool wind was blowing from the open sea and spirited the scorching heat away as though a fan were constantly wafting to and fro in front of them. The Bronx smiled in all its glory and splendor. A little further along in the Park, in the fields and among the trees, one might have believed that one had wandered into thick woods, which were overgrown with grass, bushes and tangled climbers; one's feet seemed to be treading on untouched virgin soil of an undiscovered America.

For a long time they wandered about in the grass-grown fields. Buchholz knew every tree, and wanted to climb up into every one; it was with difficulty that the others restrained him, fearing the park police.

For the first time since her arrival in America Deborah saw growing green grass, felt unpaved ground under her feet, touched moist living trees with her hands. The bare, peaceful ground, the sprouting grasses intoxicated Deborah, after the long weeks and months in the damp basement, in the stuffy workrooms. She lay down in the field, she buried her face in the grass and kissed it; she pressed her body down into it as though she wanted to bathe in it. Her two escorts scarcely knew what to do with Deborah. The quiet, reserved and usually-silent girl had lost all constraint. She began to race across the fields, and called to the men to catch her. They ran after her. Freier gave up very soon. And even Buchholz who had strong legs, and who raced along like a wild bull because he was determined to catch up with Deborah, was too clumsy, and could not get hold of her. Finally she became tired, and stood still.

"How did you learn to run so fast?"

"The goat is to blame for that."

"The goat?"

"Yes, when I was a little girl in Poland I had to herd a goat at the castle—and it was from her that I learned how to run. When she ran away, I had to go after her."

Buchholz became serious all of a sudden, made a grimace, took hold of a large tree which was near him, and embraced it.

"What is the matter with you, Buchholz?"

"I want to model that!" Buchholz pointed to the tree.

"What do you want to model?"

"Trees like that!"

"Trees in plastic art?"

"Yes"—Buchholz nodded—"big, thick, moss-grown trees like this which stand gnarled and silent in the midst of the fields in a rain storm, and act as guardians for something."

"What can you express in trees?"

"Trees have faces, have hands and feet, are entwined like children in their mother's womb; trees are great embryos, grown together, petrified before they could ever develop into human beings, accursed of God or of some other power. Trees can laugh and can cry. Have you ever heard trees laughing?"

"And why don't you model trees?"

"I am going to model them some time."

"Buchholz, what has happened to you, you are actually talking? A miracle has occurred—Buchholz is talking, he is discussing his plans! Who would ever believe that?" Freier cried out. "You are responsible for that," he turned to Deborah, "as true as I'm alive, you, and you only."

Deborah blushed. Buchholz pounced on Freier suddenly, took hold of him, lifted him into the air as he would a child, and threw him to the ground again.

"Silence! Choke him, that's what I'll do, I'll choke that fellow!"

"Buchholz, what is the matter with you?" cried Freier, not without a trace of fear in his voice.

"Silence, that is all!"

But all of this, exciting as it was, failed to provide any food. And their appetites were sharpened the more by their joyous mood and the racing about in the open air. The men tactfully pretended not to think of food. But it was Buchholz who first mentioned it, since he, like a child, was never able to conceal his desires.

"What do you think, Freier—could I get a loaf of bread in exchange for my coat?"

"I still have ten cents, let's buy bread with that," said Deborah, "we'll just have to walk back, all of us."

"Yes, that's fine. But no," Freier interpolated, "we'll spend only five cents for bread. You'll have to ride." Suddenly he became gallant.

"If we're going to walk, we'll all walk," Deborah announced decisively.

"I'll carry you on my shoulders," Buchholz laughed, showing his big white teeth.

"As sure as I'm alive, he can do that."

They left the park grounds.

When they reached the street, Deborah had an idea.

"Miss Isabel, the teacher, must live somewhere in this neighborhood. I have visited her, it was along this street; but I've forgotten the number."

"For Heaven's sake, do recall the number, do try to remember."

"Forty-two—no forty-three--no, but it was forty something."

"We'll just look round at all the houses whose numbers begin with forty!"

After looking about for quite a while, they succeeded in finding Miss Isabel's house.

Deborah went in alone, so as not to frighten the teacher by this invasion. She merely wanted to ask Miss Forster to lend her a dollar, saying that she was with two friends, and that they had spent all their money. But Miss Isabel ran into the hallway with a friendly, hospitable smile and called them all into her apartment:

"Hello, Buchholz, hello, Freier, do come in; I know, that happens to me too, sometimes."

Before them stood a young lady, her hair parted in the middle, her eyes almond-shaped; in her silk kimono she looked more Japanese than Jewish. She spoke Yiddish, but with an American accent. She knew Freier, and she had heard of Buchholz.

"I have heard about you; they tell me you are a great artist."

Buchholz blushed like a school-boy; the ungainly giant did not know how to answer her.

"Who told you that?"

"Oh, I heard it; how do you happen to know them, little Deborah?"

Deborah found it embarrassing to answer that.

In Miss Isabel's apartment there was no bed. There was a sofa, a few Japanese prints on the wall, flowers in a Japanese vase, a few dried evergreen twigs, and, in the middle of the room, a little three-legged table, upon which stood a brass candelabra with half-burned candles, and several wicker chairs —that was all.

They sat down wherever they could find room, even on the gay Japanese straw matting which lay on the floor. The Japanese lady went into the kitchen, taking Deborah with her, and improvised a lunch for her guests, using whatever she happened to have in the house: lettuce, tomatoes, olives, and little sandwiches. The men ate heartily, though they were ashamed to exhibit their appetites in front of the teacher. Then she gave them carfare for their trip home.

"Just come in whenever you like; even if I am not at home, the door is always open. I never lock my door. Just come and take what you want. Fix up whatever you find for your lunch." The invitation included all of them.

By the time they got back to town, it had grown late. When they parted Buchholz held Deborah's little hand in his big paw for a long time, and smiled, showing his weirdly large white teeth; but he could not utter a word. Freier, who stood watching this tableau, remarked cynically:

"Well? Why do you stand there like a golem? Say what you want to say. Can't you see that she is waiting for it?"

"Will you be quiet?" Buchholz's eyes flashed angrily; suddenly he spat quickly on the ground, and ran away.

After this performance Deborah and Freier parted without saying a word.

When Deborah arrived home, she found the basement wrapped in deep slumber. The shadows of the beds and of gaunt sleeping forms enveloped the entire apartment. Round about reigned the silence of that sleep which follows upon a day of hard work. But on the wall near the gas jet could be seen the long, slender shadow of a stooping woman; that

was mother, who was washing the breeches and shirts of her children in preparation for the next day.

By the shadow on the wall Deborah was able to recognize how tired and old her mother was—by the shadow she could recognize it more clearly than by watching her mother in person. The harassed shadow on the wall, with its long neck, lean sagging breasts and bent back—the shadow which occupied half the wall, seemed to be bearing an invisible burden. Pity for her mother came over Deborah. She wanted to go up to her, to embrace and kiss her, she wanted to cry, to cry on her breast. She did not do this, however, but went over to the sink instead, and pushed her mother aside:

"Let me finish up the washing."

"You go to bed! You are tired, you have been working all day."

"I am not tired. I didn't work today," Deborah answered, and turned back the sleeves of her coat.

"Do take off your coat, you'll get it wet!"

Deborah took off her coat, and assumed her mother's place at the sink.

The next morning Deborah failed to go back to her work at Salkinds. She left the basement early in order to be among the first to arrive at the employment bureau of the union. It was mid-summer and many girls and women had taken positions in the country at this time. The employers were finishing up the orders for the fall season. After one day of weary searching, Deborah succeeded in finding work in a stuffy fire-trap of a shop, with hundreds of others of her kind.

CHAPTER XXI

Neighbors

Upon the steps of his basement dwelling Ansel was crouching, half reclining, half sitting; his shirt was open at the throat, exposing his hairy chest; he breathed with difficulty, he wiped the sweat from throat and neck with one hand, and in the other he held a paper fan with which he attempted to capture a little coolness.

Night brought relief; the leaden air which rose like an invisible wall above the ground, and bore down on every one, became lighter; the limbs, yes, even the bones of the people seemed to dry out a little, and become subordinate to their owners' wills once more. But all humanity was so fatigued by the heat of the day that no one was able to move or to want to do anything. Their only desire was for a cooling drink. Dirty-faced children, in accordance with an old custom, tied beer bottles and beer mugs to ropes and cords, and their fathers, sitting in the windows above hoisted them up. To stay indoors was impossible. The walls which had absorbed the heat all day long, now, with evening, breathed forth hot steam like charcoal stoves. Women in petticoats and men ready for bed carried their bedding out of the houses and tried to find a place to sleep. Some slept on the fire-escapes, others on a balcony. The only lively and active creatures were the boys in the street. They gathered paper up out of the rubbish cans and lighted it; others drummed on the tin covers of the ash cans. The laughter of playing children penetrated into the hallways, and sometimes a voice from the street called up to a window:

"Sammy, Sammy, bring down a cushion for me."

It was late. The electric lights of the movies had gone out. The last passers-by went home. The soda-water shops were empty. But no one thought of going to sleep; on the contrary, it was now, now that the evening air dispelled the heat a bit, that tired humanity began to breathe more freely, to come to life, and to engage in conversations shouted from the street to the windows above.

From the window across the street came the sound of a synagogue melody recorded on a gramophone. The crowds at the windows, on the balconies and fire-escapes and stairways, listened quietly. Ansel too, sitting on the stairway of his basement, hearkened to the song of the famous cantor which the gramophone sent forth. He called down into the basement:

"Sarah Rifke, Sarah Rifke, come out!"

Sarah Rifke did not answer. She was so fatigued by the heat that she lay on the sofa and could hardly move.

"Sarah Rifke!" shouted Ansel once more, as the gramophone sang a prayer of the most solemn holidays.

"What do you want?" At last Sarah Rifke appears in the doorway with a cloth tied round her head.

"Listen!" says Ansel.

"Ah yes, the holidays are really almost here." Thus did Sarah Rifke, sighing, respond to the song which the gramophone gave forth.

"Who is that?" asked a woman in a window of her husband who was standing in the street.

"That is the cantor in the big synagogue in Warsaw," said the man in the street in answer to his wife's question.

"There's something in the paper about him too," said Ansel to Sarah Rifke.

"There's a man for you!" said a plump woman. "May no Evil Eye fall on him."

"Don't worry about him, he's well taken care of. He prob-

ably gets as much as a thousand dollars just for making that one gramophone record," another woman remarked.

"What do you think, Sarah Rifke, couldn't our Cantor Berl sing something into the machine?" Ansel was in the mood for a little conversation.

"I don't know," answered Sarah Rifke with a sigh.

"What don't you know? Why do you keep sighing all evening? Why were you sitting at the sewing machine all day?"

"I don't know what is the matter with me; for some time now I have had such sharp pains in my side that I can scarcely move."

"I know what causes that, that's your liver"—the plump woman who had been listening interrupted the conversation between Ansel and Sarah Rifke. "That's all caused by an enlarged liver. My mother, may she rest in peace, had the same trouble."

"My doctor says that that is rheumatism. My husband has an insurance doctor whose equal you won't find anywhere," a second listener broke in.

"Mrs. Zlotnik, don't you listen to any one, you do as I say. Go out to Coney Island and take a few ocean baths, then your side will soon be better," a third woman called from her window.

Sarah Rifke had become well acquainted with her neighbors, and all of them knew her. But America does have one unpleasant feature. Before one ever becomes acquainted with a neighbor and grows accustomed to him or establishes friendly relations, he moves away, and a new neighbor, whom one does not know, moves in; and there is always misunderstanding and quarreling at first.

Ansel had a Biblical expression for the new neighbors; he called every new neighbor, "The Pharaoh, who did not know Joseph."

But in America one becomes acquainted quickly, and every one in the whole tenement house, whether they know one

another or not, is interested in the affairs of every one else, every one knows every one else's secrets. Not only the people in the same building, but every one for blocks around, all knew the "greenhorn," Mrs. Zlotnik (Sarah Rifke was still called "the greenhorn" because she kept the Sabbath and the holidays as they did in Poland); all knew that Mrs. Zlotnik had a great many children (the Zlotnik boys were renowned throughout the entire neighborhood); all knew Ansel and respected him. And all the women praised Moses who "looks after his mother as though she were the apple of his eye."

When the women sitting at the windows heard that Sarah Rifke was complaining of sideache, they offered unsolicited advice. In this matter, Sarah Rifke, to be sure, was no exception; she would have given every neighbor similar unsolicited advice, for poverty unites people, and adversity binds them together.

When Sarah Rifke tried to get up the next morning to get breakfast for "the men," she could not rise. That had happened once before during the summer. No matter how hard she tried to get up, her feet were as heavy as lead, and she had no control over them. Ansel whispered to her as she lay in bed:

"Lie still, Sarah Rifke; if you will lie still for a day, you will feel better."

But alas, when Sarah Rifke lies in bed there is no one to do the work. Because of this Sarah Rifke tried with all her might to get up. But her feet would not obey her.

Deborah and the youngest little daughter, Mascha, prepared the breakfast and the lunch packages. We haven't said much about Mascha up to this time, because she was really no different from all other little children; but now we must mention her, because recently she had been of the greatest help to her mother about the house.

"Who will wash the dishes? Yesterday's dishes are still waiting."

In Sarah Rifke's basement rooms the question as to who

should do the dishes constantly presented a problem. For of late Sarah Rifke had been so tired in the evening that she could not wash the dishes, and because of that she left them for the next morning. If the youngest children had to go to school, there was no one to help, and Sarah Rifke had to do the dishes herself; but if they didn't have school, then they were ordered by a mandate of Solomon's to wash the dishes: "That's the way it is done in all American homes"—that was the foundation upon which "the eldest" based his command. But the boys had discovered an excellent way to get out of doing this task. Whenever they were asked to wash the dishes, they suddenly became pious and began to pray fervently; they knew that their mother would not restrain them from praying, and would wash the dishes herself.

That's what happened this time, too; when the boys perceived a hint of dish-washing, they immediately took up their prayer books. But this time their ruse didn't work. Ansel became angry and gave one of them a box on the ear and the other a poke in the ribs:

"Just look at them, my saints. Suddenly they have become pious. When their mother is ill, they grow pious."

"Ansel, I'll wash the dishes," Sarah Rifke called from her bed, "I'm going to get up soon."

Now the boys were sorry for their mother, and they wouldn't let her get up.

"We'll wash the dishes, ma!" They stopped their prayers and went to work. One of them washed, the other wiped, and they never said a word, merely nudging one another occasionally with their knees.

When afternoon came, and it was time to buy food for supper, Sarah Rifke said to herself: "Why am I lying here? What kind of holiday am I celebrating?" She tried to get up, but a wave of dizziness pulled her down again. There was no one home. The elder children had gone to work, the younger ones were playing on the street. Sarah Rifke waited until Mascha returned, and then she said to her:

"Go now, fetch a neighbor."

Mrs. Barkin was a stout, good-natured Galician; she came in with her sleeves rolled up and her face beet red, for, when Mascha called her, she was baking.

"What is the matter with you, Mrs. Zlotnik?"

"I don't know—I am dizzy; but there is nothing in the house for supper. And it is getting late."

"That's all due to your liver. My mother, may she rest in peace, had the same thing. A few salt baths, and everything will be all fixed up. Just lie still, lie still, and don't move."

"And who is going to do the cooking? My family will come home hungry."

"Just lie still, lie still, we'll do the cooking! I'm going out to the market soon—does your husband like liver? I saw a calf's liver at the butcher's, real fresh—a pleasure! Too bad that I'm having pickled meat for supper tonight. Shall I get you a pound of liver? I have some vegetable soup left over from yesterday, I'll bring that along too. That will be a great treat combined with potatoes."

"You'll prepare all of that?"

"We'll prepare it all right, we'll prepare it, just lie still, I'll bring you your soup right away."

Mrs. Barkin ran out and brought back a plate of vegetable soup; she ran out again and brought back a bowl of fresh bouillon which she had fetched from the Roumanian restaurant for the "sick neighbor"; then she ran out and brought back another woman, Mrs. Rabinowitsch from the top floor. Mrs. Rabinowitsch was devoted to rheumatism. She recommended her husband's insurance doctor to Sarah Rifke. After a while she brought in a jar of salve which the insurance doctor had prescribed for her, and declared that this salve would oust all illnesses in a moment. But Mrs. Barkin wouldn't let the neighbor delay very long.

"Mrs. Rabinowitsch, you clean up here, I'm going out to get something to fix for the men for supper, when they come home."

"Mascha! Where is Mascha?" called Sarah Rifke from her bed.

"I'll call Mascha all right, don't move, and don't get excited, for excitement enlarges the liver! That's all due to 'nerves,'" said Mrs. Barkin, who took up her shawl, and went marketing. Mrs. Rabinowitsch of the top floor went to work at cleaning up.

After a short time Mrs. Barkin returned; she had brought Mascha back with her; she assigned her to the job of peeling potatoes. She herself began to cook supper. Meanwhile she talked continually about diseases of the liver, and about her own mother, may she rest in peace, who had died of her "liver."

Sarah Rifke allowed Mrs. Barkin to take care of everything, for she herself had done the same thing for others more than once.

When Ansel came home from work he found Sarah Rifke in bed. He was frightened, for he was not used to that.

Of all the sons, only Solomon, the eldest, was at home at this time. He was living alone now and worked in his prospective father-in-law's shoe store. Sam Moses was out in the suburbs; he worked for a customer-peddler and went out delivering packages of merchandise in the villages of the suburbs all week long. Joine Gedalie, "the scholar," was working in a sanitarium in the mountains during the summer to earn money for his tuition.

Ansel did not know what to do; distracted, he stood by his wife's bedside, tugged at his beard, and asked Sarah Rifke:

"What is the matter, Sarah Rifke?"

"I feel better already," answered Sarah Rifke.

"Go, eat your supper, Reb Ansel, I don't know whether you'll like it; it won't be as good as your wife's cooking," Mrs. Barkin added.

But Sarah Rifke had more pressing concerns than her illness.

When Sam Moses came home from the village and saw

that his mother was ill, when he heard the neighbors say that she ought to have ocean baths, he insisted that she go to Coney Island to take these baths. And sure enough, one Sunday, when all the children were at home, they kept at mother until she went to Coney Island with them. Sarah Rifke came back more dead than alive.

For two days after the excursion to Coney Island mother went round the house with a lemon poultice tied about her head. Sarah Rifke was still utterly confused as the result of her excursion to Coney Island. She had scarcely recovered from this excursion when something else happened, which caused her to forget her illness; it concerned a "book."

Sam Moses who had been an active merchant before the family ever left Poland, began to think in terms of business from the minute that he first trod on American soil. He had keen powers of observation, and when he had looked about carefully, he soon noticed that in America one can "get somewhere only by beginning as a peddler; every day I earn a little more money, and soon I'll be my own boss." So he hired out to a peddler and stayed with it. He carried packages, and no distance ever proved too great for him. He would go on trips for two or three days to New Jersey, out into the rural suburbs of New York, and take the farmers whatever they needed. Since he is well, has good feet, and strong shoulders, he likes to work; so he hauls two big sacks, one on his shoulder, the other in his hand, and goes peddling from farm to farm. During these peddling expeditions he also has the opportunity to sell his own merchandise to the farmers, sometimes an ornament to be paid for in installments, sometimes an alarm clock or cutlery. He keeps his own "book" without his boss's knowledge.

In this way Sam Moses had saved up about one hundred and twenty dollars. For, although he was always ready to help his mother, he did know how to save; he ate very little, slept very little, allowed himself no pleasures at all, did everything possible, just for the sake of "getting somewhere."

But recently a rare opportunity had presented itself. An old peddler, who had grown too weak to go out into the villages himself, and whose sons had entered other fields of business, wanted to sell his "book" with the addresses of his customers, together with his outstanding debts for the price of five hundred dollars. Of this amount two hundred and fifty dollars was to be paid in cash, two hundred and fifty dollars during the course of a year at so and so much a month. Moses heard of this, and saw his "chance." But he had only one hundred and twenty dollars in cash. If he owned the books of addresses he would be able to buy his merchandise on Canal Street. But he needed two guarantors who would vouch for him. The main thing, however, was this: Where to get the remaining one hundred and thirty dollars in cash? Moreover there was no time for delay, for the business was on a paying basis, the territory, which was among the New Jersey farmers, was a good one, and there were many bidders, since purchasable "books" were rare.

As always, the only thing to do was to turn to Solomon, the eldest son. Solomon was not yet married, he was waiting until his flat was furnished. The "parloor" and the bedroom furniture were taken care of; they had been purchased with his fiancée's dowry. Solomon had invested several hundred dollars in the shoe business of his prospective father-in-law, whose partner he aspired to be. If he were to lend his brother the money it would mean to draw it out of the shoe business, and by doing that he might, which God forbid, run the risk of losing the girl. His future father-in-law and mother-in-law were displeased enough as it was because their future son-in-law was donating so much money to the "greenhorns," and considered their daughter far too little. They were dissatisfied with the diamond engagement ring which Solomon had given their daughter. "In America every one looks out for himself first of all," thus did his parents-in-law lecture him. And Solomon was already more a part of his fiancée's family than of his own.

Moses came home from this unsuccessful visit to his brother, and told his mother that the "book" might mean good fortune to all the family; it was his chance of a lifetime, he said. So his mother got ready and went down to see her eldest son herself; she begged and pleaded, kissed and embraced him, sobbed and wept, asking that he might please lend his brother the money for the book, because "next to God Sam Moses is my chief source of help." But, as mother might have foreseen, she could do nothing with Solomon. He complained that once again the family was making it impossible for him to marry. "If I draw my money out of the shoe business now, I will, which God forbid, ruin every chance of getting married. And my father-in-law doesn't want us to marry until I have invested an entire quarter-interest in the business."

Then his mother went to her future daughter-in-law, kissed her hands and, with tears in her eyes, begged the girl to prevail upon Solomon to lend his brother money for the purchase of the book.

"My child," the mother said to the fiancée, "he is more likely to listen to you than to his own mother; his heart already belongs to you, not to me." But Ansel must not know anything about this; he was a hot-tempered man, and if he had found out about it, he might have started a row at the father-in-law's house, and the marriage would have come to naught. That, then, was Sarah Rifke's worry about the "book." How could she possibly find time to think about Coney Island? Or about ocean baths? Could she permit herself the luxury of being ill, at all?

PART III

CHAPTER XXII

The Family Moves

One evening, when the family was sitting at the supper table, mother, bringing on the soup, made a remark which frightened them all.

"What are you going to do without me?" she asked, quite casually.

"What do you mean—without you?" asked Ansel, surprised.

"When I am not here any more," said mother, smiling.

Ansel opened his eyes wide.

"What nonsense are you talking? What does that mean—when you are not here any more? Where else will you be?"

"Mortals do not live forever," said mother, justifying herself, and smiling again, a bit sadly.

Ansel blew her up vigorously. The children sat sadly at the table.

Recently mother had frequently spoken of matters which filled them all with consternation. One morning when she arose she related that she had seen her sainted mother in a dream. Another time an aged aunt, long since dead, had appeared to her, had bade her have courage, assuring her that Sarah Rifke's place in the synagogue would be ready for her at the time of the solemn holidays.

Mother's remarks were soon forgotten, for every one in the house was too much preoccupied with his own affairs to pay much heed to hers. Ansel, to be sure, was a bit concerned, and reproached his wife, saying that she yielded too easily to such thoughts. He acted as though it were her fault.

But soon he, too, forgot what had happened. But Sarah Rifke never thought about being ill, nor that the doctor had prescribed ocean baths and rest for her. Worry about the forthcoming marriage of her eldest son overshadowed everything else.

"The cobblers," as Ansel called the future parents-in-law of his son, had finally agreed to set a date for the wedding, but the bride had insisted that the ceremony was not to take place at home, but in a large hall, and that every one was to wear formal dress. Solomon needed money for that. But where was he to get it, and how was he to introduce his greenhorn parents at a reception where full dress was the rule? As it was, his future parents-in-law had frequently admonished him: "Solomon, see to it that your greenhorn family doesn't embarrass us in the presence of the rich uncle." For you see, a fabulously wealthy uncle of the bride's family was to honor the wedding with his presence. So Solomon had to plan to outfit the greenhorns from head to foot for his wedding. That brought on quarreling and bickering again, and Sarah Rifke virtually sweated blood until the time arrived when she was granted the privilege of leading her eldest son to the wedding altar in the new country.

At the wedding, which took place in a hall filled with people in formal dress, Ansel was acutely conscious of the lack of proper respect on the part of the "Gostynin Young Men's Association," whose members had put in an appearance in honor of the bridegroom, and also on the part of the lodge members of the "B'nai Brith, Rothschild Branch," who attended the reception in great numbers in honor of Solomon's parents-in-law.

As the wealthy uncle was the center of attraction of the entire group, Ansel was scarcely noticed—and, more than that, the "greenhorns" were placed at the very bottom of the table. Sarah Rifke did wish to play the same role at the wedding of her son that she would have played in the old country, to help serve the food, and to press the guests to eat

and drink. She was not allowed to do that. Solomon bit his nails in anger, and finally bade his mother in urgent tones to keep her seat, and not to get up from the table.

Since the bridegroom and his family received almost no attention at all, Ansel was hurt. Soon after the ceremony was over, he pulled at Sarah Rifke's sleeve: "We are going home." He attempted to drive the little boys, who were nibbling at the leftovers from the wedding feast, away from the table, with a stern: "Go home!" But the boys escaped their father's clutches, and stayed where they were.

Deborah, who was rarely ever at home any more, and took little interest in family affairs, had come to her brother's wedding only as a matter of duty, and disappeared soon after the ceremony. The only one of the bridegroom's family who felt at ease at the celebration, was Moses, and he toadied to the aristocrats who were related to the bride's family.

When Ansel arrived at home, he vented his resentment against America on Sarah Rifke. Scarcely had he crossed the threshold of his home before he began:

"I told you right away that you would bring matters to this pass in America."

. . . . . .

The close contact with the aristocrats at his brother's wedding had made so deep an impression on Moses that he was no longer content with the basement apartment. More and more often did he comment at home about the necessity of moving "uptown," that is, of taking an apartment on the ground floor. His parents thought he was crazy, and his mother said:

"I haven't enough money to pay rent for a basement apartment, and you talk of moving above ground?"

"In America a respectable place to live is more important than anything else. We have a grown girl in the house, and we shall have to invite young people in to see us." With this argument which Sam Moses drove home, and which he con-

sidered as most convincing, he was referring to Deborah.

"Certainly; you are right, my child, it is true, of course"—mother nodded her head.

"Well, show us what you can do, it is your America, you know, not mine!" said Ansel in a resigned voice.

It was not for nothing that Mosesleben was a peddler with a "book" of his own, and his own merchandise packed up in a large bundle, whose contents he delivered in a district inhabited by Italians. He immediately went to work to figure up, with paper and pencil, how much the additional expense of a new apartment would be, and how the family could "cover" them. By doing this, he was true to his conviction that a merchant must have everything down in black and white.

With the exception of father and Deborah who, by this time, was working in a shop again, Sam Moses was the main support of the household. Almost all week he peddled merchandise in the outskirts of New York, particularly on Staten Island and in New Jersey. On his free days he stayed at home, and contributed towards the household expenses. Joine Gedalie was already well advanced in his studies; he attended preparatory school in the evening, in order to take up technical subjects later on, and to study engineering. During the day he worked in a cigar factory. He had given up his newspaper business because it didn't pay well enough to suit him. His two younger brothers had taken it over. The elder of these two, Izzy Meyer, who was called "the big boy" at home, displayed business acumen at a very early age. "He is treading in Moses' footsteps," his mother said of him.

Sam Moses was indeed waiting impatiently for the time to come when his brother would finish school. Izzy Meyer was already fifteen years old, and had to attend public school only one year more. He was an ardent sportsman, and had won a prize in the form of a bronze medal. His father had dismissed this triumph with the words: "The things for which medals are awarded in America!"

On the other hand, the younger of the boys, "the suckling," displayed a great resemblance to Joine Gedalie, the scholar. He was a quiet, steady boy, with a great desire for knowledge. As he was the youngest son, his mother loved him more than she did any of the others. The two boys also contributed something to the household budget; it was little enough, but nevertheless mother could have their shirts mended or their shoes repaired with the money they earned. Joine Gedalie paid room and board, and Deborah gave her mother all she earned. But, for Sarah Rifke, Sam Moses was, and continued to be, the chief support of the family.

When Sam Moses had completed his calculations, he called out:

"Mother, we can take a new apartment!"

"My child, I am afraid. The first of the month will soon be here. I am afraid of the first. Don't forget that we can't count on Solomon any more, he has his own bills to pay."

"Don't worry, mother, it will be all right. If money is lacking with which to pay the rent, I will make it up."

"May God reward you for this!" As always at such times, mother embraced her Mosesleben, and kissed him. "I certainly can't ask that of you."

One Sunday Sam Moses went with Deborah to hunt for rooms. They looked at all kinds of lodgings uptown, far away from their basement rooms. They couldn't go up as far as Fourteenth street, because this would have taken father too far away from the synagogue where he attended services. So they rented a place on Third Street, near Avenue B. It consisted of two rooms—one of them quite large, the other one small and dark—and a little kitchen. As the landlord remarked when he was pointing out the advantages of the apartment to them:

"Two small rooms can be made out of the large one, and then you will have a three-room apartment with a nice kitchen; it doesn't cost more than eighteen dollars a month,

and it isn't far from Avenue B, where you will find excellent street-car connections."

They rented this apartment.

When Sam Moses and Deborah came home with this news, Sarah Rifke began to be afraid again, and she said:

"Where are you taking me, children? Every one knows me here. When I have no money, I can buy on credit from the grocer, the baker or the butcher. But over there I'll be a total stranger in this big America."

"Mother, that won't matter, you can get credit there, too, America is the same everywhere."

One pleasant afternoon—it was the last day of the month, on a Sunday, a day when all the children were at home—Moses appeared with his wagon, and they began to load the so-called furnishings of the basement on to it. A few broken-down beds, bedding wrapped in sheets, mother's cooking-pots, well packed up, and Deborah's sewing-machine—all of these came to light. And yes—the chairs too were included, and way on top they laid the new rocking chair, which had been purchased on the installment plan shortly before the Passover season, when Solomon's fiancée had been expected for her first visit.

Sarah Rifke left her basement apartment with a heavy heart. After all, it had been her first home in the strange new country. In the basement it was that Sarah Rifke had prepared the first night's resting-place for her children, in that basement she had unpacked her cooking-pots. She was accustomed to it by now, and it had become dear and home-like to her. Most important of all—she had confidence in her basement, but she was afraid of the new high-priced lodging.

"It protected us like a mother," she said, and touched every wall, every nook and corner of the basement before she left it; "it offered us our first night's shelter."

Although it is no unusual occurrence in America for some one to move, nevertheless the neighbors had come in; those who happened to be busy in their kitchens or at other house-

hold duties looked in at the window to shower good wishes on Sarah Rifke:

"May you enter your new home, right foot first," they called to her with a friendly nod.

Others envied her her great good fortune:

"Heaven grant that we shall soon be moving uptown too."

During the time that Sarah Rifke had lived in the basement, she had won many friends among the neighbors, and it was hard for her to part from them.

"Heaven grant that you won't find any worse neighbors in your new home!" was their wish for her. They knew how she felt about moving away.

The boys harnessed themselves to the shafts of the wagon, Sam Moses pushed it from behind, and a Jewish porter whom he had hired helped him. Sarah Rifke followed close behind, carrying the red wine carafe which she had brought with her from the old country, and her new marriage-wig in her hand. Beside her walked Deborah, with her new hat and the cut-glass dish which they were afraid to trust to the wagon. The youngest child, the little Mascha, clung to her mother's skirts. So did they migrate from "downtown" to "uptown."

As good luck would have it Ansel was not at home during this important event, because he worked on Sundays, instead of Saturdays. When he came home from his shop in Brooklyn in the evening, one of his boys was waiting for him near the subway station and guided him to the new apartment. Ansel couldn't believe his eyes when he saw the big bright room with the windows looking out on the street, the room, of which, to quote the landlord, "two rooms could be made," and which immediately was dubbed the "parloor."

For the present, to be sure, only the rocking chair was standing in the middle of the room; everything else was still lying tied up in sheets, beside the bedsteads, which had not yet been set up. Nevertheless Ansel sent one of his boys out to the shop near by for note-paper and a pen. Then he sat down in the middle of the room, surrounded by tied-up bun-

dles, and wrote a letter to the rabbi in his home town in Poland, with whom he still carried on a correspondence:

"I have already written to you," he began, "about crossing the 'Red Sea,' and about the difficulties and trials which this involved. But that is as nothing compared with my bitter bondage under the Pharaoh of Egypt—I mean by this, the shop where I am working, together with the boss, the foreman, and all the other plagues. All of this I must endure in the new country. But when one has passed through the seven levels of hell, then one arrives at the 'land of milk and honey.' I am now seated in an apartment of which one room alone is as large as the entire Prayer House at home. There is so much light everywhere that it is as bright as day. Everything is so cleverly contrived that one may have whatever one's heart desires. To name just one thing—you can sit on a chair that rocks like a cradle; when I am cold, I need only turn a valve, and the room is warm; if I want to have a fire, a gesture suffices—and then I have a fire immediately; it is just the same with the water...."

Such descriptions, and others equally fanciful, were contained in the letter to the Rabbi; Ansel composed them without the least difficulty, as he sat there in the middle of the new, empty apartment.

Samson

One afternoon—it is on a Sabbath day, and the whole family is at home—the door opens, and a young man wearing a new suit enters (the suit is so new that it is absolutely dazzling), but with it he wears dilapidated shoes and a dilapidated hat; he asks in a loud voice:

"Does Deborah Zlotnik live here?"

Deborah looks up, and her head reels—it is Buchholz, wearing a new suit, with dilapidated hat and dilapidated shoes!

To her parents' surprise and annoyance Deborah gets up out of her chair, takes the young man's arm without saying a word, and goes out with him.

"Well, there you have the proof of what can happen in America!" said Ansel, looking at Sarah Rifke. Sarah Rifke, vexed, pinched her cheeks.

Out on the street Buchholz begins:

"I have a few dollars, and I came to get you; I want to take you out."

"How did you know my address?"

"I have been hunting for you everywhere. I did not know where you were living. They gave me your address at the place where you were working last."

"I am not working there any more."

"That's good."

"Why is that good?"

"Because Freier goes there often."

Deborah laughs.

"Where did you get the money? I see that you are wearing a new suit."

"It cost me twelve dollars, it's nice, isn't it?" Buchholz draws himself up in his new suit, the sleeves of which are too short for him; but the collar makes up for this by being too large.

"Yes, it is nice. But where did you get the money to buy it?"

"I worked for it."

"Where did you work?"

"Wherever I could. I got a little job working with coal."

"Working with coal?" asks Deborah surprised. "What did you do there?"

"What difference does it make? I wanted to have a new suit, and a few dollars in my pocket. I wanted to go out with you," said Buchholz shyly.

Deborah laughs:

"Now, what shall we do?"

"I've already made out the program. First of all we are going to take a bus ride on Fifth Avenue, but up on the top deck. We want to take a look at the streets. Then we'll take a boat in Central Park. All right. Or maybe you want to eat first? Are you hungry? In the evening we'll go to a movie. Do you want to do that? There is a Wild West picture at the 'Apollo.' Or would you perhaps like to go to a dance hall? I love to watch people dance. Do you want to do that?"

"I don't know myself what I want to do. You want to do so many things all at once!"

"I have been wanting to go out for a good time with you for so long that I don't know what to do first. Once I wanted to go to the Jewish theater with you, another time I wanted to go walking on Fifth Avenue with you; I thought about it so much that now, when I finally do have the opportunity of being with you, why—I want to do everything at the same time," Buchholz laughs.

"How is your work coming on?" asks Deborah casually.

"My work? What work do you mean?"

"Your 'Samson.'"

"I got tired of him, so I killed him off; he is lying at home in the attic, in the wet clay, and he is sleeping, but he is broken. I smashed a hole in his belly."

"Why did you do that?"

"I wanted to have a new suit, and to go out with you."

"And because of that you smashed up your 'Samson'?"

"Why not? He wouldn't let me work. Then I wrestled with him to see who was the stronger, he or I; and with one blow I smashed a hole in his belly."

"What nonsense are you talking?"

"I am going to throw out all that truck."

"Why?"

"What do I need it for? I'm going to look for a respectable job, at which I can earn money, a lot of money; oh, I've quite decided what trade I am going to learn."

"So you are going to abandon the hunger-strike which you began?" Deborah laughed. "I did not order you to buy a new suit, nor did I ask you to take me out."

"But I wanted to do it, I wanted so much to go out with you, alone with you on a free afternoon, when all working-men go out with their sweet—" Buchholz didn't finish the word. "I wanted so much to have a new suit, and a few dollars in my pocket, to do everything that you want to do, to ride on a bus with you along Fifth Avenue, to go to the Park, to eat dinner together, then go to a movie or to the Jewish theater—*Boze moi!*" Unconsciously a phrase which Buchholz still remembered from the old country had escaped his lips. "I did so long for it, I wanted it so much...."

Deborah never said a word. Her big eyes lighted up. She looked at him with her searching glance, but cast her eyes down again immediately. She pressed her little body against his. She was close to him, he heard her breathe, and felt her little palpitating body against his. Suddenly he took her hand, and began to run.

"Come, Deborah, come, let's run!"

"But that isn't nice, Buchholz!"

"What isn't nice? Are you afraid of what people will think? What do I care about their opinion? Those, over there," he pointed to the crowded, milling masses of humanity which filled the streets, "are like water, you know, but we are fishes, we are swimming, swimming...."

It was one of those wonderful autumn days in New York when all the world is garbed in gold; gold shines on the fields, in the trees, and is discernible in the New York air.

Saturday afternoon. New York has received its weekly pay envelope. Everywhere there are shining faces, every one is happy. Tomorrow is Sunday, then they may sleep as long as they like, and before them lies the night, the night which they can lengthen at will. Automobiles and busses jam the streets, pedestrians crowd the sidewalks. Every one belongs together, individuals are no longer individuals, all are merged and lost in the stream of humanity.

Buchholz and Deborah are floating in this stream. Buchholz holds her hand, the hand of Deborah, the girl who knows how to maintain such a pleasant silence, and he sees the gleam of olive skin which is visible between the dark curls which caress her neck; he feels the curve of her shoulders, the chastity, the dewy youth, the sanctity which hover about her. There is silver in his pockets, there are bills in his vest pocket....

The display window of the silk shop looks like an Oriental bazaar. Under multi-colored silk tents, mannequins dressed as Arabs are sitting on expensive rugs, and unfolding silks of many colors, brought from the Orient—scarlet as blood, deep blue like the night-sky, or silver-toned, and shimmering like luminous deep-sea fish. "If you want me to, I'll break in at night, steal all the silk, and dress you in it from head to foot. Don't laugh. I am capable of doing just that."

In the second display window a hunting scene was depicted. There lay furs which revealed the secret of the forest, of

unexplored islands in the far North—white bear skins; shining, bristly skunk pelts; velvety, caressing Alaska foxes; and luxuriously soft, gorgeous Russian sables, blue foxes and silver foxes, as satiny smooth as a woman's skin. "Just command me! I'll break in immediately, steal the furs, and dress you in them from head to foot."

In the automobile display rooms Buchholz steals the best automobile for Deborah and takes her from city to city in it; in the travel bureau he buys her a trip to Europe; in the Japanese store he steals beads for her to wear about her throat. They change their plans, they decide against a walk in Central Park, postponing it to another time. How about going to Childs for griddle cakes? Yes, that's a good idea!

When they had finished their cakes, they had coffee, then they had a treat of a baked apple with whipped cream, smoked a cigarette, and—the money was gone! There was just enough left with which to buy gallery tickets for the theater they had chosen instead of the movie. "We can pass up dinner," Buchholz decided, "we have just eaten. Or, if you like, we can go up to my 'studio,' I have a little gas stove there, we can cook tea on that, and there will be enough money left to buy nuts and bread; well, what do you think?"

Deborah agrees, she says she will go to his "studio" with him; not later, however, just before supper, but now, while it is still light.

"I would like to have you show me your 'Samson' and your other works."

"You want to see my works, really?"

"Of course. I have been wanting to see them for a long time."

"Very well, come!"

In the dark hallway, as they climbed the stairs which seemed to lead into a labyrinth, Deborah had to take hold of Buchholz's hand, and he pulled her up after him. On the fourth story the stairs were as bright as day; their turnings were most peculiar. After endless walking about in hallways and

up ladders, Buchholz led the girl into an attic room, which was separated from the rooms next door only by a thin partition; up there several old bachelors had living quarters, and one of these lodgings was Buchholz's "studio." It merited its name only by reason of the fact that its large sloping window, whose broken pane was stuffed with cotton wool, extended out over the roof, and thus formed a skylight.

It was light in the room, and Deborah could see old breeches, galoshes and dirty linen lying about on the floor, also broken chairs, a table upon which lay a razor and other shaving paraphernalia beside an old loaf of bread, a sofa with torn bedding, sheets, coal, modeling clay. A gigantic figure which reached almost to the ceiling arose in the middle of the room; it was swathed in moist cloths and looked like a ghost.

"Oh, how it looks here!" cried Deborah, and before Buchholz could stop her, she began to gather up the rags from the floor.

"Don't touch that, you'll never be able to clear that up, there's so much that one could drown in it."

"Is that the 'Samson'?" Deborah pointed to the gigantic ghost.

"Do you want to see him? There he is. I'll submit him to your decision. If you like him I'll allow him to live, if you don't, I'll twist his head off."

Buchholz pulled off the cloths, and there, in front of Deborah, was a gigantic naked figure, which resembled Buchholz to some extent, a figure standing on well-developed legs. He had a large frame, a broad chest, and two powerful arms which hung down limply as though they didn't know what to do with themselves. The entire build was that of a giant with abnormally muscular hands, feet, back and chest. But his face was that of a child; a gentle, child-like smile hovered about his lips which revealed his teeth, just as did Buchholz's lips. His half-closed eyes beneath his low and narrow forehead smiled in child-like good-humor also, naïvely,

almost stupidly. The awkward giant stood there like a fool, and his powerful hands did not know what to do with themselves.

The first thing that Deborah noticed was his thick muscular neck which grew out of his broad shoulders. She could not imagine how Buchholz could twist the head off the Colossus; that seemed impossible to her, for the entire figure looked as though it were cast of a single piece of clay, and the child-like smile made the giant appear so lifelike that it appeared to her as though he might raise his hands any moment and pull the entire room down about their ears.

"How can you twist off his head? Will he let you twist it off?" thus did Deborah express her amazement.

"I shall wrestle with him," answered Buchholz.

"He will be stronger than you."

"I wrestled with him before. See, I smashed a hole in his belly."

"Why did you do that?"

"I don't know myself. Once, when I lay in bed at night and he was standing over there, he seemed so silly to me. Why did I create him anyway? Who needs him? And what does that stupid face of his express, at that? Did you ever see such a stupid, idiotic face? He doesn't know himself what he wants."

"That is just what is nice about him. He is a giant, and a child at the same time," said Deborah. "Every giant is a child. He stands there and is strong, strong for himself, and he does not know what to do with his strength."

Buchholz became lost in thought.

"What did you say, he is strong for himself?"

"Yes, just like a violinist who plays on his violin for himself, and himself alone."

"You are right, you are right!" Buchholz shouted. "Why do you look at him? Do you like him?"

"I don't know whether I like him or not."

"Then—of what are you thinking?" asked Buchholz, who noticed that she seemed sad.

"I don't know myself. Your 'Samson' has made me feel sad."

"Why?"

"I believe that he is unhappy. In spite of all his strength, he is unhappy."

"Don't be sad, I beg of you."

"Why are you so sad? God has endowed you with such great power and such great strength."

"I am not sad."

"Why are you so unhappy?" Deborah insisted.

"I have nothing to live for!"

"You have nothing to live for? Who does have anything to live for? You create such great works, you have such great strength. God has endowed you generously."

"Me? God has endowed me generously?" Buchholz laughed harshly.

"Yes." Deborah nodded, and offered him her lips.

CHAPTER XXIV

In a Heavy Fog

Deborah, to the great displeasure and worry of her mother, began to stay out evening after evening. No one knew where she was. No shouting, no scolding, helped, and even Solomon, the eldest son, who had been sent for by his mother, and consulted in the matter, could offer no suggestions.

"Mother, that is America, you know! That's the way it is in America, that's all. When a girl goes out with a young man, her parents don't worry about it. It is better that way," he added.

The mother did not know, to be sure, what it was that was "better that way," but since this was the custom, she had to keep quiet about it. Ansel wasn't surprised at anything any more; he had only one comment to offer for anything that occurred:

"Well, is this *my* America? It is *their* America, and for all I care, they may do as they like!"

But mother was puzzled about just one thing:

"A girl goes out with a young man, well, that can happen, of course; but why doesn't she get some new clothes? Why doesn't she buy shoes or a hat like the other girls do? She goes round in rags and tatters. What is she doing with the money she earns? She brings home no more than a few dollars every week--what does she do with the rest of the money? And since she goes out with a young man, why doesn't she bring him home to introduce him to her parents?"

The eldest brother approached Deborah on this subject, obviously following a lengthy discussion with his mother:

"Deborah," he began, "mother is a 'greenhorn,' and doesn't understand the circumstances, but I know how things are done in America. You are going with a boy. All right, we have no objections to that! But why don't you bring him home? Why don't you introduce him to our parents? I am assuming that the young man is a respectable person, and has the most honorable intentions."

Deborah had nothing to say.

That worried Sarah Rifke, and she began to "raise the roof." Every day she ran over to ask her eldest son for advice. "Shloime, what can we do?" When Deborah came home late at night, her mother was still sitting in the lamplight, waiting for her. "My daughter, where were you so late?" And there were stormy scenes at home. Then the eldest son interfered, came to his mother, and reproached her:

"Mother, what are you doing? What will happen if the girl packs up her things, and leaves home entirely? That is America! And, after all," he added, "maybe she hasn't anything to tell you as yet, maybe matters haven't reached that point. When that does happen, she'll surely tell you."

So mother was frightened into silence, but her nights were sleepless nights.

. . . . . .

When Deborah leaves her shop in the evening, Buchholz is waiting for her. He is waiting at the fruit stand on the corner of Twenty-seventh street. Deborah always hurries toward him with her usual quiet smile, and her eyes shining for him, presses against him, and walks beside him as though she were grown fast to him. He walks beside her with his big hands, and with his open lips, those lips which look as though his large mouth might devour her little person entirely. They walk. Where to? They don't know themselves. And it doesn't make any difference either.

Evening in New York, winter. A light snow is falling. Their coat collars turned up, they both jog along. The streets are

filled with people, all of them hurry, not to work, however, but in pursuit of pleasure, and their faces glow. Out of the restaurants, the shops, the movies, streams of electric light are pouring, and light up the snow-covered, glittering streets. In the big, brightly-lighted windows of an automat the white-covered tables glisten invitingly. Dainty feminine feet beneath velvet coats tread down the fresh snow on the sidewalks. Couples, arm in arm, walk past. The air is yellow, filled with the brightly-shining fog of the snow, and of the electric lights. The streets are festive, cozy, every one feels at home there.

Buchholz evolves a new plan; he is filled with a new idea, he wants to create an "Adam and Eve," but an entirely new conception of the subject; Adam is to look like a tree; he is to have, not two, but six hands, which are to grow out of his body like branches. They are to be the symbol of all the races of men which sprang from his loins. Eve is to be black, a negress, dark as the earth; for she is Mother Earth. And she is to be pregnant, heavy with child. Meanwhile hunger comes upon him; he won't pay any attention to it, for he hasn't any money. But finally the urgent exhortations of his stomach cannot be ignored any longer, and Deborah usually fishes out a half-dollar or a whole dollar; then they go to Childs or to an automat.

Sometimes they go to a concert, too; naturally only when they have the money. But when a Wagner program is to be played, the money simply has to be provided somehow. Buchholz loves his music, and interprets it in his own way. Sometimes music suggests a stormy sea to him, a sea upon which twelve ships in full sail are sunk; sometimes he interprets it as a stormy sky in which clouds are waging war; at another time the music is a burning forest. "But I understand music best of all when I am sitting beside you. When you are sitting next to me I hear the music much better."

"Why better when you are with me?" asks Deborah, and her eyes light up as she looks at him.

"Just why, that I don't know. But that's the way it is. When I can look at your hair and your shoulders, then I understand the orchestra-music better."

Sometimes Buchholz vanishes for days at a time. Then he is somewhere on the East side, turning a machine in a laundry, or piling up wood in a lumber yard. But when Deborah comes out of the shop in the evening, he is waiting for her, carefully washed up, with damp, well-smoothed hair; when he sees her approaching, he waves at her from afar with a couple of dollar bills, and calls out:

"We have money for tickets."

She looks at him and recognizes by the tired lines in his face that he has been carrying wood all day; that saddens her.

"But that interferes with your work!"

"Not a bit, I didn't want to work anyhow, I had to stir my hands round a bit anyway; or, first thing I know, they'll grow fast to me."

Deborah laughs. In the evening they go to the concert.

On the way home from the concert Buchholz explains the program to Deborah in his own way. He actually models the music. "Unknown masses of humanity, entire nations, are passing through a thick, ancient forest, felling the trees, waking the wild animals with their noise, and causing the whole forest to shudder with fear. On the mountain-top is a city. By the light of the setting sun the inhabitants can see the hordes advancing; the whole town is thrown into tumult and confusion, people appear at the top of the walls, and a war to be fought to the death is begun."

On Sundays they often visited the teacher in the Bronx, their only acquaintance. Miss Forster has seen Buchholz's works, including the "Samson," and is convinced that Buchholz is a genius "of whom America will be proud some day." She inveighs against the American millionaires who spend millions for fake "old masters" from Europe, but have

no understanding of the new American art and allow the American artists to starve.

Miss Forster had promised to bring an art-critic whom she knew to Buchholz's studio; he was to look at Buchholz's works, and to try to get a stipend for him that would allow him to go to Europe to study. Since Deborah had begun to go with Buchholz, Miss Forster had taken the couple under her wing.

To help them and to make life more pleasant for them, she invited them to her house. She continually encouraged Buchholz, imbued him with self-confidence when doubts assailed him, and she persuaded him to stay by his art; she advised Deborah to inspire Buchholz, and to encourage him in his plans, which would surely bring her great rewards. Deborah did not know what Miss Forster meant by all this. She and Buchholz liked the teacher very much, and she did them many a kind turn. They could always be sure of a dinner at the teacher's house, also of a little money, if they were short of carfare for their return trip.

Of course Buchholz conceived a new plan almost every day for the stupendous work to which he was to devote his whole life, but what had seemed to him on the day previous to be the greatest work that he would create was pushed to one side the next day, and quite forgotten, for the sake of another stupendous work which had come to life during the few minutes' walk to Deborah's shop.

But, during the last few weeks, Buchholz referred only to one work which he planned to create, namely the "Mother." The "Mother" which he planned to create was not to be an elderly woman who had already borne her children, but—"the mother as a girl, small, delicate, with a little tossing curly head of hair, with small, scarcely perceptible breasts, and a round quivering belly; she is to stand on legs that are somewhat unsteady, and hold an apple in her hand; she is to represent Eve. All that is maternal, the sorrows and joys of maternity, are to be expressed in her person, and she is to smile

—an enticing, and yet a chaste smile. I cannot tell you just how that is to be done, but I imagine that is the way that Eve must have looked when she offered herself to Adam, and told him that she wanted to be a mother. She was a small girl, still undeveloped, with a little head, but in the curves of her belly there were expressed, even then, all the motherhood of the generations to come, the basic motive of all humanity, the desires of our mortal lives."

"And why don't you create it?"

"Because I cannot do it. I don't know whether I shall be able to express the eternal, the greatness, the quality of motherhood in the little child-like belly, all of the suffering and love which motherhood implies, the sin and the impelling lust, the subtle melancholy smile on her child-lips."

Deborah said nothing.

"Sometimes I almost have it, and it seems to me—all I need to do is to take hold of the clay, and I can create it immediately; but at other times it seems so unattainable that I am afraid that nothing but a commonplace girl will rise up out of the clay, a figure without meaning, without expression—in a word, a nothing."

"You can do it, Chaskel."

Buchholz trembled.

"You told me your name yourself, you know." Deborah's smile brightens up Buchholz's face.

"Yes, I forgot that; but my name sounds so strange coming from your lips! From now on, please call me Chaskel all the time, I beg of you, call me that, not Buchholz any more! Will you promise me?"

"Yes," Deborah nodded.

"Bravo, bravo, bravo," Buchholz claps his hands, "of course I can create my work, and I shall do it too! You shall see! Tomorrow I'll begin to work at it. Do you like the idea? It's a great idea, isn't it? The 'Mother' isn't a mother, but mother and child all in one. Do you like that?"

"I like it very much."

"Do you understand what I mean to express by that? Beginning and end united, like a circle—do you understand?—mother and child united."

"No, I don't understand it, but it is very beautiful, that which you plan to create, a mother who is a child; that is the way a mother really looks."

"Do you think that it will be understood? It will be standing round in my studio like my other works, covered with dust, and the mice will gnaw at it."

"What does that matter? Are you creating for others? You create for yourself alone, don't you?"

"But where am I to get money for the marble? I certainly must model this in marble," said Buchholz, worried.

"We'll find money for it somehow."

The word "we" gave Buchholz more courage than anything which Deborah had said up to this time; quite irrelevantly he fumbled for her hand:

"Deborah, do you want to help me create 'The Mother'?"

"Yes," Deborah nodded.

"Then—come and live with me!"

Deborah stopped short. Slowly she bent her head, as though she were going to sink into the floor; then she walked on without saying a word.

"When you are near me, I know what I want," Buchholz almost shouted the words.

Deborah did not answer.

A moment later Buchholz laughed out loud.

"Why are you laughing?" asked Deborah, softly and earnestly.

"I don't know what I'm saying, forgive me—it was only in fun."

Not another word was spoken about this matter. After a short time they took leave of one another.

Deborah's Way

Several days went by without their having seen one another. Buchholz waited at the shop, but Deborah did not come. That performance was repeated day after day. Buchholz thought that Deborah was angry with him because of his preposterous suggestion of their living together. He was convinced that in her eyes he was a tramp, a rascal or even worse. "To ask her to come and live with me! I certainly must be a low, vulgar fellow to even think of doing a thing like that!"

Buchholz was in that mood of self-doubt which occasionally came over him; it seemed to him that he did not deserve to be alive; that he was a swindler; that he was deceiving both himself and every one else; that his work had no value; that he himself was nothing but an uncouth, uncultured fellow. At such times he wanted to take a hammer and strike his sculptures into a thousand pieces, so that there would be an end to all of them. And since he had learned no trade, and had no education, he came to the conclusion that all he was good for was to be a tramp, a vagabond who wanders from town to town, or who hires out to a country peddler as a porter, and helps him carry his packages across the country from farmhouse to farmhouse. The mere thought of being confined within the four walls of a shop, as so many workers in New York were confined, was unbearable to him.

For many days his distracted mood had Buchholz firmly in its clutches. His conversation with Deborah, which had ended with his ridiculous proposition and her subsequent embarrassed silence, convinced him that everything which he had said to

her was insincere; not merely what he had said, but also his plan for the great immortal work which he proposed to create, the "Mother," which, more than any other creation of his, was to reveal the central theme of his art—these plans, he thought, must also be lies, a pose. "It's all just empty talk. If these ideas and plans had originated in any depth of feeling, I should not have talked about them at all." The fact that he had spoken of them seemed to Buchholz to be an unquestionable sign that his plans were insincere and dishonest.

As always, when he found himself in a mood of this kind, Buchholz lay on his bed wearing his khaki shirt, coat and boots, and covered with every sheet and rag which he usually employed to keep the clay models in his studio damp. It was so cold in the room that the corners of the big windows, whose cracked panes were stopped up with rags and cardboards, were frozen tight. The rags were frozen to the rim of ice along the window-frames, and the sun, which poured into the studio, had thawed out only a small round surface in the middle of the window. On a chair beside the bed lay a loaf of bread, with pieces broken off on every side. Buchholz had bought it the day before in a Jewish shop where he had "credit." He had been lying on his bed that way for twenty-four hours, and had no intention of getting up. The sculptures which filled the "studio," the "Samson," the "Adam" which he had only just begun, and all the others, stood there like frozen corpses, swathed in damp shrouds.

While Buchholz lies daydreaming on the bed without stirring, the door opens very softly; some one glides into the room, quiet as a thief. Buchholz looks in that direction, he thinks he must be dreaming. Or is it, perhaps, an apparition?

Deborah is standing in the doorway, wearing her little hat and her short jacket, her shabby, tan fox collar round her neck. She is holding something in her hand. What can it be? A carpet-bag? A bundle? What is it?

Buchholz doesn't move. He thinks he must be dreaming. Deborah's little hat is covered with snow, her tan fur collar

and her curls cling damply about her face. "It must be snowing outside"—passes through Buchholz's mind. Still he doesn't make a move.

Deborah brushes off the snow, puts her little carpet-bag down by the door, and comes closer. She says with her familiar, melancholy smile:

"Chaskel, why are you in bed?"

Buchholz jumps up like an arrow shot from a bow.

"Deborah?"

"Yes"—she nods her head—"I have come to live with you."

Buchholz doesn't understand; he doesn't believe his own eyes or ears, and stands there with his mouth wide open.

"Deborah!"

"But you said, you know..." again she smiles at him, with tears standing in her eyes as she does so. Buchholz says nothing. Because he does not know what to do, he picks up Deborah's carpet-bag and scrutinizes it from every angle.

"Oh, what a handsome bag!"

"That is one which I brought with me from the old country."

"It looks so homey and cozy too." Buchholz is as pleased as a child about the carpet-bag.

"Oh my, how it does look here, in your studio!" Deborah remarks, and immediately begins to put the room in order.

"My grandfather had one just like that, as true as I'm living"—Buchholz continued to stare at Deborah's carpet-bag.

. . . . . .

A little later they were sitting side by side near the little iron stove. How Buchholz had obtained money with which to buy coal will remain a deep secret for all time. The studio was in such perfect order that it was unrecognizable. The magic of a capable feminine hand was evident everywhere. Actually, nothing had been changed, and yet everything looked entirely different. The floor was swept, the sculptures

had been moved into a corner, the table which had been "limping," suddenly stood up straight once more. Everything had been put in order, the books were all together, the soiled linen was carefully hidden from view.

So there they sat near the warm little stove, and beside the stove lay a large sack of coal, and Buchholz was telling Deborah about his plans. These had changed tremendously since he had seen her last. For, most important of all, Buchholz had money now. At least he had practical plans for making money. He remembered that Moscovici had suggested a deal with a Jewish book-seller downtown, who was rather inclined to buy his "Samson," and to have innumerable miniature replicas made of it; these were to sell for a dollar apiece, and Buchholz was to have a royalty of ten per cent.

"Tomorrow I shall go down to see Moscovici, he'll take me to see that art-patron, and I'll close the deal. There are three million Jews in America, that means three million 'Samsons'; ten per cent of three million—how much is that? It will certainly be enough to pull us through until I have finished the 'Mother.' Well, and when that is finished, as I have planned to model it, with her happy body...."

But soon the mood of the enthusiastic Buchholz changes utterly:

"I know that I am tearing the very heart out of my body... that I am profaning my sculptures with such chatter. I kill them like young, newly-born children, even before they come into the world at all. You know: I am the son of a butcher. My father was a butcher, and I too...." He broke off suddenly, and looked into Deborah's eyes.

"Well?" she asked.

"I am possessed of bad, wicked impulses, I am not capable of noble, tender, sensitive feelings. I can model only massive, powerful, rude golems—that was what Freier said about me one time—because I am that kind of a golem myself. But a noble work, a work that possesses a soul—that is something I

shall never be able to create. Do you agree with Freier, Deborah?"

She looked at him with her big eyes; her glance reflected all her pity for his helplessness. Then she took hold of his coat tenderly, and said caressingly, with tears in her eyes:

"Why do you think that of me, Chaskel?"

"I think that that is what every one must think of me. Sometimes I believe that it is really true, that I am a butcher, nothing but a butcher, with ugly and wicked impulses, incapable of finer feelings."

"I have never noticed any ugly impulses in your nature. It is only people who are wicked themselves who have persuaded you of that."

"Do you really think so? And yet I lured you here with lies in the first place."

"That isn't true. You didn't lure me to come at all. I came of my own free will."

"You came of your own free will, of your own free will; I didn't lure you here at all?" Buchholz kept repeating.

"Yes," Deborah nodded.

"And if that is so, then why do I have such a guilty conscience?" Buchholz asked of himself.

"Perhaps because you are not happy about my having come?" Deborah answered his question with a coquettish little smile.

Buchholz kneeled down, buried his head in her lap, and sobbed:

"Deborah!"

"What is it, Chaskel?" she asked, and stroked his head with her cool hand.

"I don't know who I am," the giant stammered, laying his head on her knees with a sob.

"You are Chaskel, you are Chaskel, Chaskel"—she laughed joyfully.

. . . . . .

Then they went out, and ate griddle cakes at Childs.

The cakes put Buchholz into an entirely different mood. His big teeth constantly flashed in a broad smile.

But when they had come home again, he stood still in the doorway:

"You are going to sleep here. I shall go to spend the night with Freier."

And before Deborah had time to say even one word, Buchholz was dashing downstairs.

"Chaskel, where are you going?" she called to him, anxiously.

"It is better this way," Buchholz answered, and bounded down the steps as fast as he could go.

Outside the Law of Moses

The next morning, as dawn was just beginning to come in at the snow-covered windows, Deborah dressed to go out. She was just wondering where she would put the door-key so that Buchholz would be sure to find it, when the door opened, and he walked in, his hair disheveled, his face worried, unshaven; he looked as though he had not slept all night. Without saying a work he walked up and down in the studio. Deborah busied herself with her own things and was silent too.

Finally Buchholz came up to Deborah and looked deeply into her eyes.

"Why are your eyes so red? Have you been crying?"

"No."

"Yes, you have been crying, your eyelids are swollen," said Buchholz.

Deborah didn't answer him.

"And I am a rascal, a good-for-nothing cad!"

"Why do you call yourself such names?"

"Because I deserve them."

She said nothing.

"Do you think that I treated my own mother any better? No, I didn't. She gave me a sandwich to take to school for a snack, and I kicked her. I never made her happy, it always gave me pleasure to hurt her feelings, yet it gave me pleasure to do it, do you understand? I hate all mothers, oh, how I hate them!" Buchholz trembled with excitement.

Deborah walked up to him, and took his hands in her own.

"Chaskel, what is the matter with you? Where were you all night? You look terrible."

Buchholz threw himself at her feet, crouched down beside her like a dog, kissed her shoes, her feet, her dress, her hands. Then he jumped up, lifted her in his arms as though she were a little child, and paced up and down the room with her.

"You, my happiness, my destiny, my fate, you who have come to live with me, tell me please, what am I to do? What shall I do for you? Shall I throw myself out of the window?"

"No." Deborah shook her head, her eyes smiled and she placed her hand gently on his lips.

. . . . . .

A little later they were both sitting near the warm stove. Buchholz had gone out to buy bread, butter and a quarter-pound of coffee, and Deborah prepared the first breakfast of their union. They were discussing his plans again. It turned out that Deborah had not arrived with empty hands; she had brought along every cent of her previous week's earnings, twenty-four dollars in all. She was not Sarah Rifke's daughter for nothing: in her bag were all kinds of things, among them sheets, towels and other household needs.

Buchholz could not understand why all these things were needed. He insisted that they go to the Italian shops on First avenue immediately to buy household goods there. The thought of establishing a home with Deborah enchanted him so, and fired him with such enthusiasm that he did something which he had never consented to do before, even in the most critical moments of his life—and there had been many such. Buchholz had a brother, an "allrightnik," who ran a furniture store. His brother was doing very well. He had a big business in a basement on Allen street. Buchholz, who had fallen out with his family, and didn't want to hear or see anything

of them, had not seen his brother for six or seven years. Never had he turned to him for help. Now he thought of his brother. Without saying a word to Deborah about it, he set about his plans immediately.

He shaved himself carefully, put on his best shirt (since Deborah had been looking after his clothes, Buchholz always had a decent shirt to wear), and made Deborah promise not to leave the studio. "I have to go to see a good friend," he said. "It is about a very important matter. I'll come back immediately." With these words, he went out and left Deborah alone. Finally he returned and opened the door to shout, "Now come with me, I have twenty dollars!"

Then they went to a linen shop and bought linens, shirts, towels and other things; Buchholz couldn't understand at all why one needed stupid things of that kind.

Finally he decided, at Deborah's suggestion, to buy a hamper for soiled clothes. Into this they stowed away their new purchases, including the dishes, the two cooking-pots, and the salt cellar which Deborah had purchased because Buchholz liked it. He lifted the basket to his back, in his other hand he carried all manner of utensils. Thus they went home with their household furnishings.

As they climbed up the stairs—Buchholz carrying the basket with the utensils in it, and Deborah following with the plates and glasses which she wouldn't trust to his care—Deborah heard a familiar moan emerging from the floor on which their apartment was located. She was frightened. When she reached the top, she saw—her mother! A white cloth bound round her head, Sarah Rifke is sitting on the steps, swaying back and forth as though she were praying, and pinching her cheeks nervously. Leaning up against the studio door, stands father, his hands behind his back, and peers expectantly down the stairs at the approaching couple. Not far from him is Solomon, the eldest son, in an impatient mood; the nervous gestures with which he tries to calm his parents betray his own hurry to be off.

"All we need to do is to find out whether they have been married by a judge," he said to his parents in a low voice, but every word was audible. "That is the way it is done in America."

Ansel nods his head, acquiescently at his son's words, and smiles a sarcastic smile. When he sees Buchholz coming up the stairs carrying the basket on his shoulder, and the gas-oven in his hand, he turns pale with fright; when he has finally pulled himself together again, he says:

"There come your daughter, and your son-in-law too, with their household goods."

Sarah Rifke is so crushed that she cannot find any words of her own, but repeats her husband's words instead, monotonously, and in a tearful tone of voice, as though she were reciting from the Woman's book of Prayers:

"My daughter, my son-in-law, with their household goods."

"Father, what are you doing? We are in America, here every boy and girl has the right...." Solomon doesn't finish his sentence, for the couple has reached the upper floor by this time.

"I know, my son, I know. That is America for you." Ansel nods to the approaching Buchholz.

When Buchholz grasps the situation he stands still without taking the basket off his back, and looks at Deborah helplessly. But Deborah recovers her composure immediately. She isn't frightened, she is merely surprised; even her surprise seems a little artificial; obviously she has had time to prepare for this:

"Father, mother, how did you come here?" she asks.

"We came to see with whom you eloped, what kind of millionaire you picked out. In America one elopes only with millionaires. I have read about it in the newspapers...."

"Father, father"—angrily Solomon signals to his father with his eyes.

"Let's go in, then we can talk better," says Deborah calmly, "or our neighbors might come out."

"She is right," her brother interpolates.

As is usually the case in such emergencies, this is the one time of all times when Buchholz cannot find his door-key. He sets the basket down on the floor, and it takes him a good while to empty all his pockets. Meanwhile Deborah's family is having a good look at the contents of his pockets, and this does not, of course, exactly improve their opinion of him. Finally he finds his key, opens the door, and allows the visitors to enter.

Arrived in the studio, Ansel, stick in hand, walks up and down, eyeing Buchholz's establishment, and makes a thorough scrutiny of the clay figures which are standing in the room wrapped in damp cloths.

"Just give me a look at his palace, and I'll tell you who the Count is," he says, half to himself.

"You left a letter with us, daughter, saying that you were leaving home, and would never return"—her mother crumples up a bit of paper which she is holding in her hand. "How have I deserved this? What did I do, my child?" Sarah Rifke has found her voice again.

"Why do you mourn her? Is she—which may God forbid—dead? These things do happen in America," says the eldest son good-naturedly, in order to ease the strain. "My parents are still 'greenhorns,' they cling to the customs of their old home in Poland." He turns to Buchholz. "Let's get down to business; my sister has left home, and so we came to see with whom she went, and where she went. We want to know what your intentions are. We are her own family, and we have a right to know." Buchholz stood in the middle of the room and did not know what to do or say. He merely nodded in absent-minded acquiescence to all that Solomon said, as though he agreed with him perfectly.

"A girl leaves home with a boy; then, we want to know, at least, is she legally married to him? Did they appear before a judge?"

"Deborah is my wife, my true wife."

Buchholz pounds his chest—"my true wife, yes, yes, my true wife," he shouted so loudly that Solomon was frightened.

"Then it is all right, what more do you want?" Solomon turns to his parents, and adds in explanation: "That is the custom in America; if a boy loves a girl, he does not need to ask her parents. He can take her to the first judge that comes along," says Solomon to his father in a soothing voice, secretly very well pleased to think that Deborah's wedding had not cost him a cent.

"What is all right? They are married?" asks Ansel, commandingly.

"You heard him, didn't you, she is his wife. Of course they have been married. I congratulate you. I am Deborah's brother —Zlotnik, Solomon Zlotnik, of the Aronson Shoe Company. Deborah, why don't you say anything, why don't you introduce me to your husband?"

"What is all right, what?" Ansel keep interrupting in a loud voice. "Did a rabbi marry them? That is what I want to know—yes or no?"

"Why are you shouting so? What do you think—is this the old country? In America a judge can marry people too." Solomon wants to prove to Buchholz that he is no "greenhorn" any longer, but knows his way about in America.

"How have I deserved this? I had believed that it would be my happy lot to lead you to the marriage altar on my arm," Sarah Rifke now joins in the conversation.

"You goose, lead her to the wedding altar? Lead whom to the wedding altar? Come, leave immediately! I don't want to be in their rooms at all! I don't want to see her any more! You see, don't you, that is America! Not married!" Ansel draws Sarah Rifke away with him.

"Why did you do that to me? How have I deserved this?"

A fresh torrent of tears streams from her mother's eyes, and she holds out her arms toward Deborah.

"I had to do it, mother," answers Deborah, and evades her glance.

Stupid woman, why are you standing here? With whom are you talking? She has no heart! You'll come with me immediately!" Ansel pulls Sarah Rifke away.

"They are 'greenhorns,' they haven't been in this country very long," Solomon excuses his parents to Buchholz.

CHAPTER XXVII

Sarah Rifke Doesn't Understand the World Any More

Deborah's departure created such an upheaval in the household, which was just beginning to feel at home in the new country, that Sarah Rifke felt that the bottom was dropping out of everything. Ansel went about excited and angry; Deborah's name had not passed his lips since the scene in Buchholz's studio, but it was obvious that he never forgot her for one moment; he grieved day and night, and since he had no one on whom he could vent his worry and vexation, he took it out on Sarah Rifke. No matter what she did, he didn't like it. He didn't enjoy his meals, he didn't like his work, and he waged a continuous battle with the children.

He was afraid to start a quarrel with his older sons. Since Deborah's departure Mosesleben had become the chief support of the family. Their expenses had increased since their move to the new apartment; the second eldest, Joine Gedalie (who was now called simply Joine), was still at school, to be sure, but during the day he worked hard in order to give his mother a few dollars every week to help cover household expenses. Ansel asked himself, what would he do if these two were to leave home too?

But he worked off his bad humor on the two younger boys, and pretended that it was unheard-of, this refusal to keep up the habit of daily prayers in America. Ansel raged about this continually, and fell upon them in fury: "Well, when are you going to elope with a Gentile wench? When are you going

to be baptized? That's the way it is done in America, you know!" The boys didn't have any hesitation about answering him either, and this resulted in never-ending quarreling and bickering which made Sarah Rifke's life just that much harder.

And the nights! Sarah Rifke cannot sleep, and Ansel never closes an eye. When he knows that Sarah Rifke is awake, he controls his grief; but as soon as he thinks she has gone to sleep, he tosses from side to side all night long, and moans: "Oh, Father in Heaven! Not married!"

"Ansel, aren't you sleeping? What is the matter, Ansel?"

"I'm asleep, I'm asleep," Ansel mutters to quiet Sarah Rifke, and turns over on his side so vehemently that the entire bed creaks under him.

"Would you like to have me go up to see her?"

"Stupid, what do you want to go up to see her for, what for? So that she will leave him? That would be an even greater calamity, can't you understand that?"

"No, Heaven forbid, but she ought to marry him, why she is a Jewess, a Jewish daughter."

"She says that she has already married him, in American style—what do you want to go up to see her for?"

"After all, she is our daughter!" Sarah Rifke tries to excuse Deborah.

"You goose, you sheep, you cow!" Ansel brings on every member of the animal kingdom.

Then Sarah Rifke holds her tongue.

But she can find no peace. When she does her washing in the morning, and remembers that her child is living under the same roof with a strange man without having been really married to him, she begins to tremble in every limb, her knees grow weak, and her heart pounds in her throat. Then she takes up her shawl and runs out into the street. "Oh, what of it, I won't listen to Ansel after all, and desert my child!" Her washing is soaking, but she leaves it and runs away. But where? She doesn't even know where her daughter is living. Her eldest son had led her to Deborah's apartment

before. So Sarah Rifke runs a little way, and then comes back to her washing.

She waits until Mosesleben returns from his work in the country. Mosesleben is clever, his mother can talk things over with him. Mosesleben comes, his bundle on his back. Sarah Rifke waits until father has gone to work. When she is alone with her son, she prepares the kind of breakfast for him that he likes particularly well: eggs with fried onions; and when she sees how much he is enjoying it, she goes over and stands beside him.

"My child, good fortune and good health be yours, if you'll only take me to Deborah—I must see her."

"Mother, there's no use," says Moses, "don't interfere, you will only make matters worse! She has made her bed, and she must lie on it."

"But I can't stop worrying. My heart aches when I think about it."

"What will be the result of your interfering? He will leave her and go away. How can you know just how matters stand between them?"

"My child, I can find no peace when I think that my child is living with a strange man without being married to him!" Mother pinches her cheek nervously.

"What are you talking about, mother? Why, she is his wife, you know that. They were married by a judge. Solomon told you that that is as much of a marriage in America as to be married by a rabbi. Don't you understand why I don't want to take you to her? You will heap reproaches upon him—and he is an American boy—you might spoil everything! Just trust her, she knows what she is doing!"

"My child, I won't let you have any peace until you take me to her! I want to see her once more. I swear that I won't talk about it any more; I only want to see her. After all, she is my own flesh and blood." His mother bursts into tears.

"Heaven forbid! Everything is all right, but you aren't to interfere."

But Sarah Rifke was deaf to such warnings. She complained, she wept, and she begged, until Moses took pity on her, and one day he did take her to see Deborah, though not to the studio, but to the shop where she was working.

"She is working? She is married, and yet she is working? What kind of a marriage is that?" asked her mother in surprise.

"Are you beginning all over again? In America one doesn't interfere in such matters! How do you know how they get on together? And what will you do if he goes away and leaves her? Will that improve matters?" whispers Moses in his mother's ear.

"Very well, I promise you, my child, I won't say a word about it. My heart may break, but I won't mention a thing."

Sam Moses led his mother to Deborah's place of work, and her mother stood on the street and waited until her child came out of the shop.

When she saw Deborah approaching in the distance, still wearing her old suit and the fox fur which Sam Moses had bought for her during the holidays, mother's heart grew heavy. "Where is your trousseau, my daughter?" she asked, speaking to herself; and, shaking her head, she came out of her hiding-place and went up to her daughter.

"Good evening, daughter."

Deborah, frightened, started up.

"Mother, what are you doing here?" she said with her sweet little smile, just as though nothing had happened.

"I came just to see you. You are still working, my child? You are married and working?" Tears came to Sarah Rifke's eyes.

"Well, aren't you working? You are married too." Deborah, smiling, embraced her mother.

"I am working for my children."

"And I am working for my husband. You worked for your husband too, didn't you?"

"And where is your trousseau? Still the same suit, and the fox fur!"

"Why didn't you sew a trousseau for me?" asks Deborah, with a smile.

"You never gave me a chance, did you? Nobody knew that you were going to be married, my child!"

"And if you had known it, would you have sewed a trousseau for me? Out of your old wedding dress? I hope you won't have anything worse to worry about than that, mother! I'd rather you'd tell me how you are feeling, and how you are getting along without my financial help, now that you are living in the new rooms uptown and your expenses are so much greater"—Deborah embraced her mother again.

"It is hard enough, my child. I worry a great deal, and when the first of the month comes round, I don't know where I'm at."

"And Moses?"

"Don't say a word about Moses; he does all he can, more than he can do, really; next to God, right next to Him, is my Moses. What would I do without him?"

"Maybe you ought to take a roomer in my place. The new home is large enough for that!"

"The men want me to do that too, but I don't want to. I am still waiting for—my child, maybe you will come back?"

"I, come back? And what would I do with my child?" Deborah laughs out loud.

"Your child?" asks her mother.

"Yes, yes, mother. You have your children and I have my child." She embraces her mother and kisses her. "Well, then, keep well, mother, my child is waiting for me, I must go home to get supper," says Deborah in order to avoid any discussion about her marriage; moreover, she had noticed that Moses was back of a fruit stand, waiting.

"Deborah, Deborah!" her mother calls after her.

"I'll see you again soon, mother," says Deborah, hurrying toward a street-car. "Here comes my car."

"My child, I don't understand this world any more, I don't understand it any more, it is time for me to die," says Sarah Rifke to Moses who is waiting for her.

Sarah Rifke's Pots Are Spick and Span

Sarah Rifke lay on her bed at night and thought about what would happen if she were to die. She considered her children, one by one: "As a matter of fact, all of my children are now able to take care of themselves, and I am no longer needed. Shloime is married, Deborah too, in her own way; Mosesleben will know how to get along, the 'scholar,' Joine, is also supporting himself, even the two boys don't need their mother any more; they will grow up without me."

Sarah Rifke was concerned about no one except Ansel, and her youngest daughter. "What will Ansel do without me? And who will wash out Mascha's little school dress for her? Who will look after Ansel? How will he get on without me?"

Sarah Rifke had the feeling that there was a long journey ahead of her—she must get ready for this journey and leave her loved ones behind. She tries to imagine what the home will be like after she is gone: Ansel will get up early, at dawn, and, instead of praying, he will stand in the kitchen and cook coffee for the children. He will be tired when he comes home from work, wearily he will walk along, and then, instead of finding his supper ready for him on the table. he will have to go into the kitchen to prepare it. He certainly won't permit a strange woman to come in to work for him! And Ansel will stand at the sink and wash out the little dress for Mascha, so that she will be ready for school tomorrow. While Sarah Rifke is absorbed in drawing this fanciful picture of the future, Ansel coughs suddenly and recalls her from her ruminations. She reproaches herself: "Do I actually know

that these things are going to happen? How could that be possible—that I should be going away? The time for that is not yet here."

She wants so much to lie in bed a while longer, and to let her thoughts drift, to let them drift—until she falls asleep. She is tired and sleepy. All her limbs feel heavy, and lie limp upon the bed. Even if she had wanted to do so, she could not have pulled herself together. "It is so sweet to be weary, oh, if I could only lie like this forever, just lie here!"

The clock strikes six. Sarah Rifke knows that she ought to get up; she *has* to get up, it is getting very late. Ansel is certainly awake by now, but he doesn't dare to move, because he is afraid of waking her; she knows her Ansel.

"I mustn't lie here any longer, why, it is late," she thinks, and still she doesn't get up. "Why don't I get up? What kind of a holiday am I taking? But to lie still is so sweet! Never has it seemed so sweet to lie quietly in bed as right now!"

Sarah Rifke sees how Ansel gets his feet out of bed, and then begins to dress: at the other end of the room some one else is moving—Sam Moses is awake. What will the end of all this be? She has no pain; on the contrary, she feels so well, and as light as air. It is just that she is tired, and wants to lie still.

"Sarah Rifke," says Ansel, "are you ill?"

"No. I don't know what it is, I just don't want to get up."

Ansel is not prepared for that. This was the first time he had ever heard Sarah Rifke say that she did not want to get up.

"Well, if you don't want to get up, then lie still."

"And who will get your breakfast for you?"

"The breakfast will be prepared, never fear."

"Oh no, no"—she tries to get up, but cannot.

"Ansel," she says, "I don't know what is wrong with me."

"You have probably taken cold. Stay in bed all day today, and by evening you will feel better."

"You are right," she says, and lies down again.

Ansel is surprised that Sarah Rifke yields so quickly. "That isn't like her at all," he thinks; he comes over to her bed suddenly.

"Is there something wrong with you? Have you any pain?"

"No. There is nothing wrong with me. It is just that I am tired."

"Well, just stay in bed all day, then you can take a rest."

"I believe that that will be the best thing to do," says Sarah Rifke, and stretches her weary limbs.

Ansel is surprised. "That isn't like her at all," is the thought that passes through his mind.

. . . . . .

It was late in the afternoon , and Sarah Rifke said to herself: "I mustn't lie here any longer."

In their old lodgings they had had neighbors who would have come in, at Mascha's request, and prepared the supper; but here, in this new home, they had not yet had time to become acquainted with the neighbors; they were strangers to her, and she did not want to bother strangers. So Sarah Rifke decided to lie still until the children came home from school.

She lies in bed, and sinks into a state of waking dreams. It seems to her that she has died—it is so pleasant to have died! She lies in bed with her limbs stretched out, and she will never have to move them any more, she will never have to get up, never again. She will never have to worry any more, never think about the approach of the first of the month; the rent, the washing, the children's clothing, the bills at the shops—they don't concern her; everything is in order, everything takes care of itself, the washing washes itself, the meals cook themselves, the apartment puts itself in order, and she, Sarah Rifke, doesn't have to do anything except to lie still, to lie still, to lie still——

Then her childhood came to mind, little by little, as from the pages of a book. Her mother has come in, she is wearing

the big, Turkish shawl with the forehead band. Sarah Rifke is surprised to see her mother here. She knows her mother is dead, and lies buried in Lentschitza. This reminds Sarah Rifke that she hadn't even gone to visit her mother's grave before she came to America. How is it that her mother is in America now? How did she cross the ocean? A miracle—thinks Sarah Rifke to herself—a miracle!

Meanwhile the room has been transformed. Now it has become the old basement lodgings again, but at the same time it is the big room at home in Gostynin in Poland. Oh, there are the three heavy beams up at the ceiling! The heaviest one is in the middle, the little chandelier is suspended from it, fastened to a large hook. Sarah Rifke is surprised: "What is that? Where am I? In the old home? In America?"

All the homes in which she had ever lived blend into *one* room in Sarah Rifke's imagination, and it is a Friday evening, and her cooking pots are standing, all washed and scoured, on a corner cupboard. Deborah is standing in a corner near the stove, and is washing her hair. Deborah is still a little girl, Joine Gedalie is still a little boy, and Izzy Meyer is lying in his mother's arms.

"But I must get up! Why do I go on lying here? Ansel will be coming home from the synagogue soon." Sarah Rifke forces herself to emerge from her stupor. She wakes up and sees her daughter, the little Mascha, who has just come home from school.

"Why, where was I?" Sarah Rifke tries to remember. "In America, or in the old country?"

And she continues to lie there, though she is wide awake now, and her eyes are open. She looks at Mascha and begins to understand what has happened to her.

"Who is going to wash her hair?" she asks herself. "What kind of a holiday am I taking, anyway?" Sarah Rifke rises from her bed with a great effort, and puts her feet out from under the coverlet. "The time hasn't come for that, the time hasn't come!"

Sarah Rifke took a few steps; her knees gave way, she felt dizzy, her head seemed to leave her body, and to be floating about somewhere in the air.

"Ma, mother! What is wrong?" The little girl ran up to her mother, who had fallen over suddenly.

Ma didn't answer.

"Ma, ma!" screamed the child, and opened the door. "Ma...."

Neighbors came in and carried Sarah Rifke to her bed.

When Ansel returned home from work, he found his eldest son and his son's wife beside the mother's bed. A doctor was there too, holding a whispered consultation with Solomon. The children were quiet, walking about on tip-toe, or sitting around in the corners of the room. Sarah Rifke had a fever, and her cheeks were burning red. The few gray hairs that escaped from the white kerchief about her head, were damp with sweat, and clung to her forehead. Sarah Rifke really appeared to be very well; never had Ansel seen her look so blooming, and with such rosy cheeks. Only her lips had turned blue. She lay there and glanced around with frightened eyes. When she saw her Ansel beside her bed, she stared at him with wide-open eyes, as though she wanted to ask him to forgive her for being ill.

"Sarahla, what is the matter with you?" Ansel called his wife by the pet name which he used only in moments of tenderness.

"Ansel," she stammered, and held out her hard, worn hand to him, the hand which was now unnaturally pale.

"What is it, Sarah dear?" asks Ansel anxiously.

"I don't know, Ansel," she shakes her head.

"What does the doctor say?" Ansel turns to his son.

"Mother has to go to the hospital."

"To the hospital?" asks Ansel in surprise.

"They can't find out what ails her," says the eldest son.

"They can't find out what ails her?" Ansel echoes his son's words in surprise.

The son and daughter-in-law go home. The children go back into the kitchen. Ansel stays in the room alone. He sits down near Sarah Rifke's bed, and his eyes, like those of his wife, stare out into space; he is thinking of something, he rocks back and forth as though he were praying, and he says nothing; but from time to time he does ask:

"Sarah Rifke, are you in pain?"

Sarah Rifke shakes her head.

Ansel sits at her bedside, and rocks back and forth as though he were praying.

"Ansel, go and eat your supper." Sarah Rifke calls upon her entire strength to enable her to say these few words. "The children will cook for you."

"I'll eat—yes." Ansel makes a gesture, but stays where he is, and continues to rock back and forth.

Then Moses comes in, with his packages on his back. As soon as he enters the kitchen, he knows that something must have happened to mother. He could surmise this by the children's strained silence.

"What has happened?"

"Ma is sick."

Moses puts his packages down quickly, and walks softly to his mother in the bedroom. He looks at his father, and scarcely recognizes him. His father seems to have grown much older during the few hours that have passed by since Moses has seen him last, much grayer too, and bowed down. Moses becomes frightened, and walks softly over to the bed. His father rouses himself, and recognizes his son:

"Ah, Moishe?"

"What is wrong with mother?"

"Mother took sick suddenly, she has to go to the hospital."

"To the hospital?" repeats Moses.

Mother looks at her son with big, fever-glowing eyes. Moses stands at her bedside, and receives his mother's glance. Her eyes seem to be asking him for something; she looks up at

him like a dumb animal that cannot speak, and is pleading for something.

"Mother!" whispers Moses.

"Do you want anything, dear Sarah?"—Ansel bends to put his ear against her lips.

"My son," whisper the mother's lips.

"She says 'my son.'" Ansel rocks back and forth piously.

. . . . . .

No one slept that night. Again and again Moses begged his father to lie down in the next room; but Ansel said nothing. From the moment he had sat down at his wife's bedside, he stayed where he was, rocked back and forth constantly, as though he were praying, and said nothing. Sarah Rifke looked at him, and begged of him with her eyes to go and lie down; sometimes she moved her lips too: "Ansel, Ansel!"

"Sarahleben." Ansel bent his ear to her lips.

Mother was fully conscious and knew everything that went on about her, although she had a high fever, and was too weak to speak—she spoke with her eyes. She didn't close them for a second, and by means of her eyes she carried on her conversations, sometimes with her husband, sometimes with her son. The language of the eyes was a felicitous choice, for her eyes expressed what her lips could never have said. Now she took leave of her loved ones, next she comforted them, then she asked for something. Moses knew why his mother was looking at him, what she wanted to say to him, what she was thinking. Mother asked what was in her heart, and he promised to do everything she wanted; at his mother's sick-bed he assumed the duty of taking care of the little children until they were grown, if—which God forbid—anything were to happen to mother. His mother heard the promises which he made to her innermost being, and when she had finished with this communication of the eyes she became calmer. A feeling of relief swept over her, and she surrendered herself docilely to the Protection of Someone. Tired, she

closed her eyes, and seemed to be sleeping. But she was not sleeping. Now she started up again, tortured by disturbing thoughts; there was something which she had left undone; again she turned to Moses with her pleading, helpless eyes. Moses understood what she meant.

"Do you want me to call Deborah?" he whispered.

"What is she thinking of?" Ansel started up.

"I believe that that is what mother wants," said Moses, and looked at his mother as he spoke.

"There's time enough for that, isn't there? It's late at night." Ansel's face was distorted with pain.

Moses looked at his mother as though to reassure her. Mutely he nodded at her, and his mother understood him. Her eyelids half closed down over her glazed eyeballs, and the large, yellow eyeballs looked at him gratefully.

When the hospital attendants carried mother to the hospital on the stretcher the next morning, she was awakened for a moment by the weeping and screaming of the children. Lying on the stretcher, she opened her eyes wide once more. But she was no longer conscious.

As they carried her through the kitchen, her eyes fell upon the cooking-pots which stood on the shelf above the stove. It seemed to her that they sparkled and shone as never before. Surprised, she thought to herself: "Who scoured the cooking-pots so brightly for me in preparation for the Sabbath? . . ."

CHAPTER XXIX

Tapers Glow in the Synagogue

Outside the hospital Sarah Rifke's children were walking up and down disconsolately, like little lost sheep, their eyes red and swollen with weeping. They whispered softly together. At the entrance, as close to the entrance as he could possibly get, stood Ansel. During the few days which had passed by since Sarah Rifke had become ill he had fallen away like a shrunken lemon. The hair of his beard had become stiff and harsh. Tirelessly did he stand there at the entrance, and he tried and tried to go in, but every time he made the attempt, the attendant on duty slammed the door in his face. Ansel stood there as tensely as though his entire body were but one single, taut muscle, and repeated over and over again:

"What does that mean—they won't let us come in?"

"That is the rule."

"Oh, what! Rule! This is a matter of life or death."

The eldest son, who was standing next to Moses and holding a whispered conversation with him, came up to his father, and tried to calm him:

"They will let us in soon. I have spoken to the superintendent. They are transferring her to a private room."

"She is being transferred, she is being transferred, and that means, that means?" Ansel bit his lips until they bled.

"Mother is in a very critical condition," said the eldest son, and held his hand over his eyes.

"That means, that means, that means?" Ansel never stopped biting his lips. "Why don't they let us in to see her then?" he knit his brows.

"They will let us in soon," said the eldest son, weeping.

Moses hides his face in his hands, and sobs loudly, leaning against a large pillar. When the two younger boys, who are standing some distance away with their brother Joine Gedalie, see their older brothers weeping, they begin to cry too.

Mascha is not present; Solomon's wife has taken her away to her home. Only Deborah is standing apart from all the others; she is still wearing her suit and her tan fox fur. She is the only one of the children who is not crying. Her expression is sad and serious, and yet there is a trace of a smile on her lips.

No one pays any attention to Deborah and no one speaks to her. She is standing alone, apart, as though she had been thrust out of the family altogether. All of them believe that, in some way, she is to blame for mother's illness. She herself has a suspicion of this feeling, but she does not have any sense of guilt or remorse. Defiant and stubborn, she stands where she is, and stares earnestly into space.

While the children, heavy-hearted, are standing outside, pressed against the walls and doors, Sarah Rifke has entered a large synagogue. In it there are many long boxes filled with sand, in which large candles are placed in memory of the dead, as is the custom at Yom Kippur. But they are not lighted. Along the walls of the synagogue, arranged on shelves, stand brilliantly-polished, shining cooking-pots, scoured in preparation for the Feast of the Passover. Sarah Rifke is puzzled: "What are the cooking-pots doing in the synagogue?" She inspects the cooking-pots more closely, and recognizes them: "Why, those are my own pots, the ones I brought from Poland, the ones I always use for cooking!" She recognizes one after the other--there is the big, round-bellied one with the cracked rim which she had inherited from her mother; and there is the one she had bought for the Feast of the Passover. What in the world are her cooking-pots doing in the synagogue? Inside the synagogue many Jews are assembled, all of

them wearing white robes, but they are not praying—all of them are waiting for something. And, on the rostrum, Sarah Rifke sees her Ansel standing in front of the unrolled Scroll of the Law, wrapped in the sacerdotal robe which she had washed out for him in preparation for the holidays. He is standing in front of the unrolled Scroll of the Law, but he hasn't begun to recite. "What are they waiting for? And why am I lying in bed? I ought to be getting up!" But she cannot get up. She is tied fast to her bed.

"Why am I tied to the bed? Where is Ansel? Where has he disappeared to? Just a moment ago he was up on the rostrum, and now he is not there. No one is in the synagogue!" All alone, she lies enclosed by four bare walls, and no one is with her. A pit opens beneath her: "I am going to sink down with the bed, and no one is here, Ansel isn't here, none of the children are here. Where are they? ..."

Frightened, Sarah Rifke opens her eyes and looks about her. And she sees her husband and her children standing beside the bed; all of them are present, Deborah too; and Ansel is standing at the head of the bed, rocking back and forth, and he is saying something in a solemn voice—she sees everything; she sees every one of them; Shloime and the daughter-in-law who has given her a black lace shawl which she is to wear when she goes to services at the synagogue. "Stupid child, do I have time to go to the synagogue? God will certainly forgive me, but I must prepare the meals for the men-folk, you know," she thinks to herself. "Why is dear Moses crying so hard?" She wants to say to him: "Why, don't cry!" "If he can only hear me"—she thinks—"if he can only hear me! Oh, Deborah is here, too."

"I have been wanting to tell her something important, something very important; all of this time I have remembered it, and have been afraid that I might forget it, and now, of all times, I have forgotten it! No, I must not forget it." Sarah Rifke makes one last effort and opens her eyes and looks at Deborah, but the little children are crying so hard that it is

impossible for her to remember what she wants to tell Deborah.

It breaks Sarah Rifke's heart to hear her children crying. Now, now she has it: "You must live as a Jewish wife should live, or I shall not be able to find peace in my grave!"

"Now it has been said! She certainly heard me, now I feel easier, a burden has fallen away from me, yes, a great burden! Now I can turn my attention to the little children: Izzy, you must pray every day, and not forget to recite the *Kaddish*, the prayer for the dead, every day after I am gone; and you must treat your father well, and not forget him in his old age. Did you children hear me? Yes, yes, they did hear me, the children have promised me on my death-bed, to do what I asked them to do. Now my heart feels at ease, so much at ease! Everything is taken care of now—now I can close my eyes in peace!"

Sarah Rifke's eyes became fixed, her eyelids drooped wearily over the jaundiced eyeballs; she turned her head to the wall.

But soon the weeping of the children called their mother back again: "Ma, darling ma!" "Dearest mother!" Once again did Sarah Rifke open her eyes and look mutely upon her children. Even now she recognized them, only they were a little blurred, and seemed to blend into one person. Her ears, however, heard Ansel's voice quite clearly. He was not crying, he was praying fervently. Her eyes tried to find him, but they could not. "He is standing at the head of the bed, and saying the prayers for the dying." She became quite tranquil, and docilely surrendered to the Protection of Someone....

And then the large candles standing in the sand-boxes in the synagogue, flare up. It is so bright in the synagogue, and all the Jews in their white robes and their prayer shawls have begun to pray. Their voices ring out in fervent solemnity. And, up on the rostrum, at the head of Sarah Rifke's bed, Ansel is standing, wrapped in his prayer shawl, and reading

the Scriptures. "His voice is so sweet, he is reading the Scriptures with such fervor, with such feeling. May the strength to do so be granted him!" That was Sarah Rifke's last thought, and it was this thought that lulled her to sleep as she listened to the sound of Ansel's praying.

Out of the night some one came to meet her. It was her mother, wearing the dress of large Turkish design, her headband wound about her head; and she said:

"My child, do not be afraid!"

This time the weeping of the children did not call Sarah Rifke back again. . . .

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Through the narrow little streets of New York's East Side a coffin made its way, covered with the black drape of the society *Ansche Emes Bnei Gostynin*, and drawn by a tall, cadaverous white horse. Behind the coffin walked Ansel and Sarah Rifke's eight children; they held on to the ends of the coffin and accompanied their mother, weeping and lamenting in a way that drew the attention of the passers-by to the cortège for the space of a moment or two. Several townsmen of Sarah Rifke's from Poland followed the coffin also, among them Reb Isaac, the sexton. There was one carriage too, and in it sat Solomon's parents-in-law, with their daughter. At Moses' request, the coffin passed through Essex Street, so that the neighbors whom they had known when they lived in the basement apartment might have an opportunity to pay their last respects to their old neighbor. In front of the basement apartment a few of the neighbors were indeed waiting for the cortège, and they followed the coffin for a few blocks with sorrowful sighs. Then they remembered that they had their own work to do, took leave of the coffin with mute glances, and turned back to their every-day tasks. At the Williamsburgh Bridge, the townsmen from Gostynin and Solomon's parents-in-law deserted the coffin; the children, worn out with weeping, got into the carriage. Only Ansel

refused to give up. Keeping his hand on the coffin, he accompanied Sarah Rifke to the cemetery. The passers-by, observing the not unusual sight of a coffin being followed by a lone Jew never suspected that a heroine was being laid to eternal rest....

The Sacrifice

One evening when Deborah came home from work, she found the studio door locked, and the key in its accustomed place. She was not surprised; for Buchholz often did just that.

She was puzzled, however, to find that the stove, in which no fire was burning, was quite cold; this was a sure sign that Buchholz had not been home all day. After she had lighted a fire in the stove, Deborah set about to prepare the supper, as she did every evening. She thought that Buchholz might come in any minute. But when considerable time had passed without his having put in an appearance, Deborah became a little uneasy. She did not care to eat alone, although she was hungry. So she sat down by the warm little stove in the lamplight and waited for Buchholz. And as she sat there she thought about him, about herself, and also about something else, something which made her so very uneasy that she was even afraid that some one might read her very thoughts....

She had a suspicion that Buchholz was not happy with her. Of course he loved her, but he was not happy. Deborah could understand that. How differently she had imagined that her union with Buchholz would be! She had hoped that it would be like the beautiful romances of which she had read in books; she was to work for him, and he was to devote himself entirely to his ideals, and was to create the works which he had discussed with her, when they had gone walking together along the streets in the hazy glow of the electric lights. It was for this that she had given up all that was precious to

her, and had come to live with him. But since she had been living with him—and by this time several months had gone by—he did nothing at all. He was sad and silent, walked about the streets in aimless fashion, or sat idly in the coffee house. He had entirely forgotten his work. It was not only that he failed to create anything new, but he did not even complete what he had begun, and he did not speak of it any more. And the important creation of which he had dreamed, and about which he had been so enthusiastic that Deborah had considered it her duty to help him bring it into being, seemed to have vanished from his thoughts. Several times Buchholz had asked Deborah to pose for him in the nude, and he had then made a few sketches of her; but he did not complete these either, and nothing came of all his plans and ideas.

Deborah recognized that Buchholz was not happy with her. His melancholy mood and the absence of any trace of inspiration during the last few weeks had made this clear to her. Sometimes—Deborah feels this instinctively—Buchholz had tried to drown his melancholy and feeling of resigned despair in a tumult of tempestuous passion.... But the cold gray light of day always returned and dispersed the beautiful dreams of the intoxicating night.

"If he feels that way, why am I sitting here?" she thought to herself.

Deborah did not try to imagine what her own situation might be if she were to leave him; her concern was chiefly with Buchholz; she was trying to decide what would be best for him—life without her or life with her. And something told her that he would go to pieces without her: "In his bewilderment he will not know what to do. He will go downtown again and do manual labor, until he finds something that suits him—and that will be his downfall. Or, worse yet, he will sell himself to some dealer for whom he will have to make portrait busts from disreputable photographs, and he will be terribly unhappy." Deborah was absolutely sure that Buchholz needed her. She could not leave him, she must

stay with him as long as he needed her, whether he was happy with her or not! That was the way that Deborah saw it.

Not until she was quite clear in her mind as to what constituted her duty toward Buchholz did she begin to think about herself. Her little brow was transformed into a veritable whirlpool of wrinkles, and the fine line which had made its appearance at the corner of her mouth during the last few weeks stood out in sharp relief in the lamplight. For two weeks she had known that she was pregnant. And if matters went on this way, she knew that the consequences would be serious both for herself and for him....

She had not yet developed any definite attitude toward the life which she felt within her body. This unexpected being which grew within her was still so strange to her that she felt no emotion toward it except one of fear—fear that what had happened, although it was so close to her, and actually part of herself, would nevertheless destroy everything that she considered important and sacred, and for the sake of which she was prepared to sacrifice herself. Only one thing was important and sacred—namely that Chaskel must be free at all costs to fulfill his artistic calling, and she must allow no other bonds to usurp her energy, but must devote herself to him exclusively. For the sake of this ideal she had suppressed everything which, up to this time, had been dear to her. Freedom had ever been her goal—freedom to surrender herself utterly to the one whom she had chosen, to the one to whom she felt she was destined to belong. This new being who lives within her is something quite different, to be sure; it is her very own, but she builds up a resistance to it. And this new being had come upon her so suddenly, so unexpectedly!

She was altogether unprepared for this new emotion, she was able to regard it only as an obstacle which prevented her from accomplishing her purpose, and she feared this obstacle. Fear took utter possession of her, and crowded out all

other emotions which this new being might otherwise have awakened in her....

Deborah had not yet decided what she ought to do; she was still afraid to think of it; but one thing she knew for certain: "Whatever happens, he must not know about it; Chaskel must not be allowed to have the slightest suspicion as to how matters stand. Everything which is to be done, I must do by myself, without his help...."

Long did Deborah sit there, absorbed in such thoughts; there was a worried frown on her face, and her heart throbbed painfully. Finally she heard Buchholz come in. She heard him come in, but she could not see him. Since that had happened of which she was afraid to think out loud, Buchholz had become more precious to her than ever before, nearer and dearer; she loved to hear his footsteps, to know that he was close by, and yet not to see him, but merely to sit there with eyes closed, to hear him moving about, and to dream of her happiness.... That was the way she was sitting now, with eyes closed, in the shadow of the large room, and she smiled as he came in:

"Chaskel, is it you?"

"Yes."

"Where have you been all this time? I have been waiting for you."

"I have found work, a job," he answered.

"Work, a job?" Amazed, Deborah opens her eyes, and stares at him. She is startled. His clothes are dusty, covered with plaster, his face streaked with paint.

"I've been trying to get a job there for some time. That is work at which I can earn a lot of money. There"—he drew several dollar bills out of his pocket.

"What kind of work?"

"Engraving tombstones."

"Tombstones?"

"I know the work well, I can get work there any time. All I have to do is to join the union, then I can have work

whenever I want it. Up to now I didn't want to do it, I didn't see why I should. When I needed a few dollars to pay the rent for the studio, I went to work for a few days. But now I have decided to accept a steady job, I shall join the union and begin to earn money, and be a respectable person. As for those"—he pointed to his sculptures—"they will never amount to anything anyway."

Deborah said nothing. Her silence suggested to Buchholz that he had to make excuses for taking this step.

"It's a long way from here, it's in Long Island, that is why I came home so late."

She went up to him.

"Why are you doing this?" she asked, and, as always, she looked him straight in the eyes.

"What of it, do you want me to model portrait busts from photographs? Do you think that might be better?"

Deborah bent her head; she seemed to be repeating the question to herself.

"And what is to happen to your art if you take a job?"

"Nothing more is going to happen to it, ever." Buchholz made a gesture of resignation.

"Why do you talk like that, Chaskel?" Deborah looked at him pleadingly.

"But I must do something. I cannot sit around idly, I cannot wait until something suddenly pops into my brain, and meanwhile let you work for me," Buchholz shouted.

"Why were you able to 'idle away' your time before this?"

"Yes—before—that was different. Then I starved alone, and it didn't concern any one, not any one; when I wanted to do so I worked, when I wanted to lie here like a dog on his matting, I did that; and when I liked, played with my 'little people,' the ones I had created for myself."

"And why is it all different now?"

"Now, now . . . now I feel as though there were a rope round my neck, as though a burden were bearing down on me. I can't touch those any more!" He pointed to his sculptures.

"How can I do it if you sit in the shop all day and work for me?"

"I work for you? I work for us. You said yourself, you know, that we two are one," said Deborah shyly, and in such a low tone of voice that he could scarcely hear her.

"Then you mustn't work either, then let us starve together! We will roam through the streets like tramps, do you understand? I am not going to sit here, and cuddle up by the stove while you work for me; how would I ever be able to do creative work under such circumstances?"

"But I am not an artist. I do not require the proper mood in order to do my work"—Deborah smiled—"nor am I able to do any other kind of work; what could I do except sew? And I am happy too, to be able to do something for you so that you can devote yourself to your work. Why, what meaning has my life without that, after all?" she added softly.

"But I don't want you to work. If you work I shall work too. Either we are both going to work, or both of us are going to remain idle."

"And how shall we live?" asked Deborah.

"Then we simply *won't* live, we'll both go cold and hungry. Who says that we must live, that we must work and eat? Either we are both going to work, or we shall starve together. Will you promise me that, will you?"

Deborah nodded her head in smiling assent. And the evening passed in the usual manner; Buchholz carried Deborah up and down the studio on his shoulders, and dreamed dreams of greatness.

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When Deborah arose very early the next morning, and was about to start for work, Buchholz detained her; he barred her way and locked the door.

"You are not to go. If you do, I shall go too, just as soon as you have left."

"But, child, one of us must go to work, you know. You

cannot do work of that kind, you are made for something better than that. So I must do it. And it is only temporary, after all, only until we get ahead a little, until you have created your great sculpture. Then I won't have to go to work any more."

"Do you really believe that?" Buchholz asked earnestly.

"Yes, I believe that!" Deborah looked deeply into his eyes, and said with all the earnestness which was expressed in her glance: "I believe that you are a great artist, that you were predestined to create great works of art."

Buchholz said nothing for a long time. Then he caught hold of Deborah's hand and pulled her to him with all his strength. He wanted to say something, but thought better of it, and said, instead:

"But today you must not go to work! Only today! I beg of you. Today we will tramp through the streets. Just see, it has been snowing! Come quickly, or the snow will be shoveled away before we get down." Joyfully Buchholz pulled Deborah out to the street with him.

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It was high time. Deborah could not wait much longer if she really meant to do something about it—not only because other people might notice, but also because of the effect on herself. She was afraid that if she waited she might become so attached to the awakening life within her that she would no longer be able to bear the thought of relinquishing it.

But her mind was made up. She regarded "it" as a kind of inanimate growth, as a kind of illness, of which she must rid herself as soon as possible. Suddenly she became more frightened than ever—afraid that she could not do what she knew she must do; afraid, because she realized that she was beginning to assume a definitely affectionate attitude towards "it."

"I *must* do it, I must do it, for Chaskel's sake; I must not, I must not"—tears came to her eyes—"I must not wait another day."

But in whom could she confide? To whom could she go for advice?

One evening, when she was walking home and going over her problem in her mind, she thought of Miss Forster, the teacher in the night school. Deborah's mind cleared suddenly.

"Why haven't I thought of her before? She is a woman, a progressive woman, and she has often said to me, 'Little girl, if you ever get into any kind of trouble, come to me.' I will ask her for advice. I won't ask anything of her except advice," Deborah said to herself; "in such matters only a woman can advise one."

She went to see Miss Forster. She confided in her, and added apologetically:

"I must not have a child. I cannot make a slave of Buchholz, so that he will have to work for me. What is to become of him? If he notices that I am pregnant, he won't let me work, he will accept orders for making portrait busts from photographs, just as he has been threatening to do. Then he will never amount to anything." Deborah could not restrain her tears.

"Deborah, my child, don't cry." The teacher embraced her tenderly.

"I don't know if what I am doing is right, but I cannot allow Buchholz to give up everything for my sake, and to descend to that which is the lot of all the rest of us—to become an ordinary workman. He is not that kind of person, at all," Deborah sobbed, with her little hands in front of her eyes. "He was destined for something better than that; is he to give up everything for my sake?"

"Don't cry, don't cry!" Like an older sister, the teacher drew Deborah to her. "I do understand."

"If you won't help me, I shall try to find another way out. I won't have a child," said Deborah, resolutely and firmly, then dried her tears and quieted down.

"I'll help you. I understand everything." Miss Forster comforted her.

"But it must be immediately, next week, during the holidays. Buchholz is going to the country. He must not know anything about this. I shall have time enough then."

"I will find out about it. Come back on Saturday, I'll have your answer ready for you then. I have a friend. I'll ask him. I believe that I can help you."

Deborah grasped Miss Forster's hand, bent over it, and said: "How can I thank you?"

"Do you love Buchholz very much?" Miss Forster asked suddenly.

Deborah nodded: "Yes."

"And yet you want to do this?"

"I must—no, I want to do it," answered Deborah, pursing her lips tightly, and wouldn't say another word.

"You are a good little girl." Miss Forster embraced her.

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On Saturday Deborah was informed that, during the holidays, she would have to be prepared to spend several days in the private institution which had been established by a well-known progressive woman for the purpose of giving birth-control aid and instruction to the wives of workingmen, and thus cut down the overproduction of human material in the field of industry.

The great difficulty which now presented itself to Deborah was the problem of getting Buchholz out of the way. He had become observant of late, for he had noticed that Deborah was worrying about something which she kept secret from him. And he was determined that she should tell him what was wrong.

"I am worrying about the children at home. I think I shall have to go home for a few days and look after them, so that everything will run smoothly again."

"Yes, do that!" said Buchholz.

"But I am afraid that you will follow me. You know very well that they are angry at us at home." Deborah wanted to make quite sure that there would be no slip-up.

"Do you know—why don't you go away for a few days? There is a lot of snow everywhere now; that will make you feel refreshed, and you will come back feeling like a new man."

Buchholz fell in with this suggestion readily.

"All right," he said, "I'll go to visit my friend's farm in the country."

"But do wait until next week! Then there will be a double holiday, and I won't be working. I'll go home for a few days, and you go to the country."

But Deborah didn't find it at all easy to get Buchholz to go. At the last moment he had quite made up his mind to spend the holidays with her, so that she might have a little rest too. With the greatest of difficulty she finally succeeded in sending him away. Not until she was sure that he had left town and had gone off to the farm of his Jewish friend, where he had often worked during the summer, did she begin to make preparations.

As she was walking along from her home to the institution, carrying her little bundle of clothing under her arm, she had to pass through a park in the neighborhood. It was a glorious winter's day, the kind which is to be found only in New York. The sun shone as though it were summer. The park was filled with snow which had hardened into frost. Mothers, pushing perambulators, crowded the walks. Children, wearing suits of white jersey and white wool mittens, waged merry snowball battles. The mothers lifted their children, wrapped in white wool, fragrant with the sweet odor of rich milk, out of the perambulators, held them up to the sunshine, rejoiced in them, laughed and played with them. Deborah stopped for a moment. A thought flashed through her mind. For only a moment did she stop, then quickly she reminded herself of the duty which she was called upon to perform, and hastened on her way.

A few days later Deborah returned home once more. By some good fortune Buchholz had not yet returned, and she

had time to make preparations for his arrival that would prevent him from noticing anything. He came back refreshed, and in good spirits. The days in the country, in the snow and ice, had helped him. He wanted to go to the movies, or a coffee house in Greenwich Village with Deborah that very evening. He had brought back several dollars from the country, which he had earned by helping his friend the farmer haul in wood from the forest. To avoid suspicion, Deborah assented to his wish and said she would go with him, although she still felt very weak, and could scarcely stand on her feet. Slowly she dressed to go. She laughed a good deal, and did all she could to sustain his jolly mood; but nevertheless Buchholz noticed how weak she was.

"What is the matter with you, why are you so pale? Aren't you well?" he asked.

"Why, of course, what an idea! I am still a little tired, that is all, there was so much to do at home."

"How are the folks at home? How is everything getting along there?"

"They are getting along well enough without me," said Deborah, and seemed a little bit sad.

"You are so sad! I don't know what is the matter with you. Some kind of a change has come over you. And you are so pale."

"You just imagine that. I am tired, that is all."

"Maybe we'd better not go out this evening. Let's postpone it until another time, you are too tired."

"No, I would like to go out, I'd like to forget my troubles for a while," Deborah answered, and went over to the mirror to arrange her hair.

Buchholz looked at her. Her feet are poised so drolly, so curiously, like those of a little weak-kneed, newborn calf. She is standing there so uncertainly, so awkwardly, that she can hardly keep on her legs. The least breeze could blow her over.

Buchholz had an idea. He opens his eyes wide, as though

he had seen an apparition. Suddenly, his mind is so clear, he remembers something. A vision appears before him, an apparition which he has seen before, in another existence, in another world. "That is the way she will stand," he murmurs to himself, "that is the way she will stand, my 'Mother,' unsteadily, with feet as slender as wires, just like those of a new-born calf, like one that hasn't yet learned how to stand erect."

"You are so quiet," calls Deborah from the mirror, as though she had read Buchholz's thoughts.

"It is nothing, nothing," Buchholz answers, and keeps his eyes riveted upon her. But Deborah cannot stand up much longer.

"I am so tired today," she says, and looks about for an arm chair in which to sink down.

Buchholz notices something on the floor where she has just been standing. His heart contracts with pain. Quickly he turns his glance away, so that she may not notice that he has seen anything. In his mind one thought beats over and over again: "Like a wounded animal...."

"We won't go out today," says Buchholz, as he gets up, and takes off his coat again.

"I want to get supper. Why must it always be you who prepares it? Can't I do that too? You will see in a minute how well I do it. Just stay where you are!"

Quickly he busied himself about the room, pushing the table and chairs round in front of the mirror where Deborah had been standing, so that she would not suspect that he had noticed anything.

Then he took up his coat to go marketing. Before he went he pleaded with her:

"I beg of you, don't move an inch. You are not to do anything till I come back. I'll have the water boiling in a moment. Today I'm going to do everything. This is the way I want it. Can't I have it this way? It gives me pleasure to get supper for you today. You are to sit here like a queen, like a

little princess, and I shall be your slave, your black, strong slave, who is in love with his queen, and gets her supper for her, see?"—he smiles at her. "Promise me that, won't you?"

"Whatever in the world ails you today, Chaskel?"

Mind, heart and senses, all were possessed by two sensations; the first was the feeling of "my own," called forth by what he had just seen; the second, the thought of his new sculpture, which had suddenly appeared before him as clearly defined as though illuminated by a lightning flash from heaven. He knew quite definitely now what it was that he wanted to express: "The Mother Who Bleeds...."

This thought intoxicated him. He went marketing, returning with both necessary and unnecessary purchases. Deborah was frightened when she saw that Buchholz returned with several bottles of milk in his pocket.

"Why did you bring so much milk? Who is to drink it?"

"I want to get drunk on milk today." Buchholz laughed.

"With milk? Why?"

"You see, she is to be like a calf, a little new-born calf which is hardly able to stand on its legs."

"Who?"

"The 'Mother.' Do you see?" He came up to her, excitedly.

"What is the matter with you, Chaskel?" she asked, frightened.

Buchholz did not answer.

The Masterpiece

For the first time in his life Buchholz felt that the clay in his hands was really of flesh and blood and pulsating with life; and he modeled it upon the wire framework with the self-confidence of a master who is sure of himself. The idea, which had taken complete possession of him, gave him power to throw off those doubts which had heretofore crept up on him like dark shadows to wind their black veils of despair about him. For the first time he was working from a living model, from a being who inspired him. And he forced his living model to assume the aspect of the vision which he saw reflected in the mirror of his mind.

These were the happiest and most radiant weeks of their life together. Life had taken on meaning and purpose. Deborah began to comprehend what she had done; seen by the light of her happiness it appeared justified and purified. More than that; that deed, of which she did not dare think, became sanctified within her. Instead of remorse she felt contentment, and she could actually have boasted of her act.

For Buchholz there were days of restless creation. On such days he was unconscious of himself and his body. His work sufficed for everything.

The hours of daylight were not long enough. The shop robbed him of Deborah by day. And when they could cheat the shop of a few hours of daylight, they did it with a conscious feeling of pleasure. Saturday afternoons and Sundays were entirely their own, with the exception of the evening hours. Buchholz could not work by gas light. The shadows

it cast were too yellow; they blurred the outlines of the figure. So they lighted candles, which helped to reflect the symphony of line with their soft, warm glow. The candlelight was also used to a great extent for making the sketches which Buchholz then translated into clay by daylight. They had not yet given up the idea of reproducing the figure in marble, but they couldn't get enough money together for this purpose. Moreover, Buchholz was so enthusiastic about expressing his idea through the medium of clay; later the work could be wrought of marble, with the help of an assistant.

He worked intensely, and under a great strain. Sometimes Deborah had to pose for him in the nude for three or four hours at a stretch without resting; and the studio was poorly-heated. Her skin became furrowed with cold. Those very furrows helped him to express even more clearly the essential purity and innocence of her pose. Deborah endured everything, accepting it as though it were a sacrificial fast day, a prayer, a sacred duty, and she did this with complete and serious devotion to the sacred work which Buchholz was doing, and in which she believed with pious naïveté.

In the midst of the work the rent came due. Deborah was possessed of two big worries ever since she had chosen her own way of life, the same worries which had caused her mother so many sleepless nights. The worry about the rent and about the fuel had obviously been handed down from mother to daughter as an inheritance. Deborah was able to earn enough money by working in the shop to take care of their every-day needs. But when the first of the month came round, and it was time to pay the rent for the studio, then Deborah never knew where she was going to get the money. Over and over again they promised one another solemnly that they would save and put by a few dollars every week—but then a concert came along, or Buchholz decided to eat out in the evening. This month, however, Deborah did her worrying about the rent in silence, without saying anything

to Buchholz about it, so that when he did remember it, she might be able to tell him that everything had been taken care of. But this precaution proved to be an unnecessary one. Buchholz never even thought of it.

The figure progressed under his skillful hands, and one day it stood in the middle of the room like an apparition.

It was Deborah, and yet it was not Deborah. It was a different Deborah, one who lived somewhere in strange regions, from which Buchholz had conjured her up by some power of enchantment. The face was a familiar face, the face of a girl from home. Everyone who saw it said that he had seen this face somewhere before, but where and when no one could remember. Buchholz himself did not know whether he had succeeded or not.

The figure had not turned out quite as he had planned. He had not represented it, as he had originally intended, to look like a newly-born calf, not yet able to stand up straight. But the legs were very long and slender; indeed, in proportion to the rest of the body they were far too long and too slender. Buchholz was aware of that. He seemed to have done this intentionally, as though by so doing he were trying to emphasize some definite quality. The hips were broad and strong, and the belly curved like that of a pregnant woman. A look of smiling chastity hovered on her face, but in her expression the artist had suggested something of proud shamelessness; she seemed to gaze out into the world with insolent self-assurance, proud of her pregnant body as though she alone were thus blessed.

The entire figure gave the impression of being true to life, and yet not true to life. At first glance it looked absolutely droll. But when one regarded it more closely, both face and form seemed as familiar as a vision which one has seen in a dream. No one who saw this figure could refrain from saying: "Oh, I am sure I know her, I have seen her at some time or other." But when and where, well, that was something no one could remember.

When Buchholz had finished it, he was convinced that he had created "the greatest work in the world." He dashed about joyfully, and kept crying out, looking at the figure from every angle:

"Yes, that is exactly what I wanted to do!"

But a few days later such despair and despondency came upon him that he wanted to destroy his work. "A cripple, created by a cripple!" He heaped the most insulting invectives upon himself and upon the figure, and could not understand why he should be permitted to go on living. In his rage he covered it with a cloth so that he might not have to see it any more.

Then came the connoisseurs. Freier decided that Buchholz was getting to be too "sentimental" and too "lyrical." "His marriage, and nothing else, is to blame for that," he said in a low voice to Moscovici, so that Deborah might not hear him.

"This time you did not succeed. This work doesn't reach the heights," stated Freier, speaking like an oracle; "it is too lyrical to suit me, and for you to become lyrical, Buchholz, doesn't constitute an improvement. Your forte lies in broad shoulders, giants—that, over there, that isn't the kind of thing for you to do." Freier shook his head.

And Moscovici said:

"According to the theories of composition the work lacks harmony; the composition must be built up like a Greek temple, from the base upward; but that work of yours is constructed from the top downwards."

Buchholz stood there with his mouth open, and didn't know whether he had become "lyrical" or not, nor whether his work had been designed like a Greek temple or not. "Why does it have to be like a Greek temple, why just that?" he asked himself. "But if Moscovici says so, there must be something to it; he has studied composition."

Deborah stood near by listening, and heard how Buchholz's sculpture was being disparaged and discussed in a way that

hurt her. She felt identified with this work. It had too much of herself, too much that was part of her personal and intimate life, in it. She would have liked, best of all, to have hidden it away from the scrutinizing glances of strangers, so that no one might see it. And now people were standing in front of it and looking at it with coldly appraising and unsympathetic eyes! Deborah felt as though she herself had been insulted and humiliated. So she went up to the figure, put the damp cloth over it, and said, with a laugh:

"This work Chaskel made for us, for us alone, and for no one else, didn't you, Chaskel?"

Buchholz meditated on what she had said; it seemed strange to him that he had not known that, and had not thought of it. He really had not created this work for any one except for the two of them alone! How will any one who does not know what his thoughts were while he was working, ever be able to understand it? And he went up to the figure, pushed it aside, and hid it, as one hides something personal, intimate, from the eyes of the world. At the same time he murmured Deborah's words:

"This work was made for no one—just for us two alone."

For the first time the real meaning of his sculpture became clearly defined in his own mind.

Sarah Rifke Keeps Watch

The snow descended in irregular flurries. Downward or upward—one could scarcely distinguish from which direction it came. The whole world seemed to be enclosed in checkered nets which constantly swayed from side to side.

With two packs of merchandise flung across his back, one in front, the other in back, for the sake of balance, Moses Zlotnik made his way through the white net of snow which encircled the entire space between heaven and earth.

Moses didn't worry about anything; it was still early in the day, and he knew the road well. He was on his way to visit a German farmer, a customer whose installment payment was due that day. And, as Moses had learned that it was the birthday of this German, he wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to sell the farmer's wife a half-dozen handtowels and the two sheets for which she had been bargaining with him for a long time. This was "his territory." He knew every house along the road, from Redhill to Tottenville in Staten Island; although the houses were widely separated from one another, and the countryside was thickly wooded, still he did know it thoroughly; in fact, he took this route two or three times a week.

Today was the fifteenth of the month, the day for paying debts, the day on which the farmers are prepared to make their semi-monthly payments to the peddler. And Moses knows. If he allows this day to go by without making his calls, it will be difficult to collect the payments later.

A farmer in Redhill had given him a good dinner, which

gave him a comfortable sense of well-being. The wind and snow set his youthful blood glowing, he felt light on his feet, and full of energy; so he made his way against the wind as though to defy it, completely absorbed in dreams of the great plans which had occupied his mind for a long time.

"I have two hundred and eighty dollars in a savings account at the bank, which I can draw out whenever I like. My outstanding accounts amount to more than three hundred dollars, which are as good as cash money, as good as gold. My wares are worth about three hundred and fifty dollars. This is a good territory, most of the costumers are Germans, who pay promptly. If I were to convert everything into cash, and sell the business outright, I could easily get from seven hundred to eight hundred dollars, maybe even as much as a cold thousand. When you consider how high my rating is among the dealers in the basement shops in Allen Street—certainly I don't have to work as a common porter, do I?"

Maybe he ought to marry, some immigrant girl, perhaps, one who had a few dollars cash besides. For a merchant nothing is more important than capital. Visions of fabulous sums of money danced in front of Moses's eyes, $1000, $1500, $2000, $3000. "No, not that much," he says to himself; "oh, about $1200 to $1500." Maybe he could take over a well-established business and work with his parents-in-law.

But suddenly he remembered. "No," he said to himself, "not yet, not yet. I must wait until Mascha is grown up. I promised mother. And I shall keep my promise." He thinks the matter over for a long, long time, until he really begins to feel a little uncomfortable, and then is filled with self-pity: "Why must I wait so long?" But then he remembers his mother's face: "No, that is what I must do, I must help them get ahead!" His father wouldn't know what to do without him. The housekeeper has to be paid, the children must have some one to care for them. Joine Gedalie still requires a little boost now and then; he must be given an opportunity to complete his studies too.

But wait! Why not go into partnership with Solomon? When he comes home on Friday evenings to visit his father, he complains: "To go into partnership with one's father-in-law isn't the thing to do." What did he need them for anyway, those "Germans," let him take his few dollars out of their business, and we'll go into partnership: "Solomon and Moses...." No, his own name, Moses, first: "Moses and Solomon Zlotnik, Brothers."

In his mind's eye, Moses sees, even now, a long sign, bright with gold letters, extending across three windows. He and Solomon are to be the heads of the business; Solomon, the inside man, will take care of the factory and of the hiring of the factory hands and the office employees. "I'll be the outside man; I'll take care of the buying, the credits, and make the contacts with customers. Father won't need to work any more, we'll give him everything he needs. He can live in a nice apartment in Harlem, and look after the children. The two older boys, Izzy and Nute, we'll take into the business. Only the youngest little girl will be at home with father, and he will walk along the streets with dignity, carrying a gold-headed cane."

For quite some time Moses had been conscious of a strange feeling of chill. Overheated from carrying the heavy packages, and from walking against the wind and snow, his whole body was cold and damp. He had not thought much about it; his day-dreams about "Moses and Solomon Zlotnik, Brothers" had preoccupied his thoughts to such a degree that he had not even noticed that his feet, which had been treading the sidewalk when he started, were now sinking down into snowdrifts, and that it was getting to be more and more difficult to draw them out. He looked round and tried to think: "Now where am I?"

Through the snow, which was now blowing from all sides, he could see ahead only as though he were looking through a veil. He began to walk to one side, as it seemed to him that that was the right road; suddenly he found that he was

surrounded by briars and bushes, which were "up to their necks" in snow; only the branches were visible, extended upward, as though they were pleading to be saved.

"Where am I?" Moses asked himself, and began to walk back, stepping into his own footprints in the snow; he thought that by so doing he could most easily find his way back to the road by which he had come.

It was a long time before he felt the hard stony road under his feet again. Now he was, as he thought, on the right path once more, and he began to walk ahead at a rapid pace. "It is getting late, it is getting late," he said to himself, and tried to peer through the veil of snow to see what time of day it might be; but in the snow everything was gray. Heaven and earth were not to be distinguished; all that could be seen anywhere was a monotonous pall of gray. It might have been early in the day, and it might as well have been very late.

Now Moses had the wind at his back; that hastened his speed, as though he had been driven forward.

"Somewhere in this neighborhood there must be the red house of the Irish farmer, the house that is located between Redhill and the farm of the German," said Moses to himself. "The Irish farmer won't let a Jew come into his house, so I've always avoided him; but now, in weather like this, I'll try to get him. He certainly won't chase me away in weather like this."

Once again Moses tried to turn off the road, and to see whether the field which was adjacent to the red house were not close by. Again he came upon the briars and bushes which projected up out of the snow, and his feet sank down into the boggy earth which lay beneath.

"I am in the wild woods," said Moses to himself, "how did I get here? I'll have to get out of this woods before night comes on!" he decided, and began to run back with all the energy and strength of youth.

Moses had confidence in his sense of orientation. And he couldn't imagine that he was in any danger: "Snow—what

harm can snow do me?" As for the cold, he didn't notice that any more; on the contrary, his whole body felt warm and flushed. He walked back with quick, long strides.

He had been walking for about half an hour without having seen a single house, without having met a single wagon or having seen a single person. Whenever he tried to take a few steps to the side, he found himself surrounded by briars and bushes. Moses began to feel uneasy.

"Where can I be? This road must certainly come to an end somewhere, and bring me out somewhere!" With firm, quick strides he walked on.

Soon, however, the rapid walking and the heavy packages he was carrying began to tire him. His whole body was covered with perspiration, and the wind licked the drops of perspiration off; a benumbing chill penetrated his body from head to foot. He stood still, laid down his packages, and sat down to rest.

As he did so he noticed, peering through the veil of snow which swayed from side to side in front of his eyes, that the monotonous gray of the sky was getting darker. Everything was blurred and indistinct, and merged into one confused mass. And above this mass, the veil of snow swept back and forth, ceaselessly, endlessly. It seemed to Moses as though he had been caught in the net of snow, and would never find his way out again.

It grew darker and darker. It was impossible to know whether the darkness came from above or from below; it originated from within itself. And the veil of snow which, until now, had been white, turned blue.

"Why am I sitting here? Night is falling!" Moses jumped up hastily, threw his packages across his back, and went on.

"Oh God, help me"—it was a cry from the heart—"or I must perish here!"

Again he stumbled upon the road down which he had come. And suddenly he was standing in front of a wall of trees; the fog and the snow flurry had hidden the trees from

sight until he was right up to them, and had almost bumped into them.

"Shall I go in? I'll certainly get lost there!" he said to himself. "And I've just come from the opposite direction." Without knowing what he ought to do, he stood there irresolute.

"Mother," again the call from the heart; "what shall I do?"

He felt hot; his body steamed with heat and fear, his hands and feet, which were covered with heavy snow, grew damp. The dampness penetrated his overheated body. He felt that his shirt was clinging to his back. At every step he was conscious of a slippery moisture in his shoes as though they were filled with mud.

"What shall I do?" he asked himself. "No, I won't go into the woods! I shall certainly get lost there. I shall go back, no matter how long it takes me—I'll certainly have to come out somewhere!"

"Mother, pray for me!" he called loudly, and began to walk back.

Then he heard a dog barking. He stood still. The barking came from the woods. Without waiting to give the matter much thought, he went back into the woods, inspired by the hope which the dog's barking had awakened in him.

It had grown quite dark, and the veil of snow was so dense that he could not see his hand before his face. Moses did not walk, he ran, although the snowdrifts became higher and higher, and his feet sank in deeper and deeper.

Soon he saw a roof-top among the trees, and then a wall; he took a deep breath and slowly approached the house.

But he did not see any light. That surprised him. "If a dog is there some one must be at home!" he said to himself, and walked up closer to the house.

Nobody was stirring. The doors and windows were closed tight and shuttered. He could hear the dog barking inside.

Moses went up to the door. The dog became more and

more agitated, he ran against the door and barked; but no human being appeared.

Moses knocked at the door vigorously. The dog behind the door went wild. He ran up against it so vigorously that it seemed as though he must burst it open and attack Moses. But still no one came out.

"Just my luck," said Moses to himself. "There's no one at home. I'll stand under the roof." He walked over to stand beneath the projection of the roof to find shelter from the snow. The dog barked continually. Now that Moses was standing still the cold was almost unbearable. His feet were as heavy as though iron chains were hanging from them; they were actually frozen to the ground where he was standing. His clothes, to which the snow had frozen fast, became stiff with cold; Moses felt his shirt grow hard as lead. He trembled with cold, his teeth chattered. It sounded like the clinking of glass. His toes and finger-tips were attacked by stabbing pains as though pierced with hot needles.

"Mother, I shall perish!" he complained; "I shall perish here.... Who will look after the others? They won't know how to manage without me.... Mother, help me, I am still so young to die!"

Tears gushed down his face. And through the tears he saw a face in the dark veil of the snow-flurry. It did not frighten him—it was Sarah Rifke's face.

"Mother!" called Moses, and extended his hands toward the vision in supplication; but it did not remain longer than a moment.

"You will help me! You will help me!" he cried, took up his two packages, and began to run with tenacious despair, without knowing where he was going.

Although night had descended among the trees, wrapped in a veil of snow, nevertheless Moses ran ahead with rapid steps; he bumped against branches and trees, but he paid no attention to them; instinctively he found the road which wound in among the trees in a serpentine course, and he ran,

he ran on. He was sure that he would finally come out safely somewhere.

Soon he stood still. His eyes gleamed with joy, and his heart leaped up. Between the trees he saw, quite distinctly, a flare of light. A little distance off the road, hidden by the snow and among the trees, stood a house, and the lamplight came from the windows. Breathlessly he ran up to the door.

A tall, haggard farmer stood before him, with a red face, red hair, and a short red beard. Moses saw him as if in a dream, and fell fainting into his strong arms.

The farmer took his packages from him, put him into the nearest chair, and called into the next room in a loud voice:

"Hello, hello! Some one has come to see us!"

. . . . . .

Many years later, even after Moses had become the head of the firm, "Moses and Solomon Zlotnik, Brothers," he would recount the story again and again, telling of the miracle that had come to pass the night when his mother had come to save him:

"How did a red-headed farmer ever get there? I certainly never saw him before...."

In Bermann's Basement Café

Miss Forster began to take an interest in Buchholz. Ever since Deborah had come to her for intimate advice, she had felt in close sympathy with the young couple.

She considered how she might manage to obtain publicity for Buchholz. For a long time now she had been planning to bring an American newspaper-man to see him, so that the papers might run a story about him and his studio. Up to this time she had not succeeded. But one Saturday evening she invited Buchholz to come to Bermann's Café where she hoped to be able to introduce him to the editor of an important American newspaper—an editor who could do something for him.

Saturday, when Deborah brought home her weekly earnings, was a day which offered a splendid opportunity for a visit to Bermann's Café; besides, Freier and Moscovici were of the opinion that, whether the new sculpture which Buchholz had created was good or not good, well-proportioned or not well-proportioned, it certainly ought to be "dampened" with wine. Besides, Buchholz was in the right mood for going on a spree.... At the completion of any important piece of work he was always so wrought up emotionally that he had to express his feelings in some way or other.

It was at this time that Bermann's Café was just beginning to be famous. Especially did the artists and writers like to frequent it, to pass an evening there, and to absorb the "atmosphere." At first the Café was merely an ordinary restaurant for East Side business men who wanted to enjoy a

savory and well-seasoned supper together with their fat wives or plump women friends. The real attraction of the Café, however, was Bermann's playing of the cembalo. Bermann, the proprietor of the restaurant, did not look at all like a restaurant-owner who served such strongly-spiced, rich dishes as those which were available in his Café. His face was that of an artist; and that was what he really was too, when he was playing his Wallachian melodies on his cembalo. He was a young man with a delicate, pale face, and his slender, rapid fingers flew over the strings of his instrument like the wind. The usual visitors of his restaurant cared little for the sad and sobbing melodies of Wallachia which his little hammers knew how to lure from the instrument so beautifully that it seemed as though Bermann had, by some magic, brought the singing and weeping of his distant Roumanian fields into the smoky, steamy Café. Through some chance a Jewish poet had discovered the Café, and finally brought all his friends with him. Now Bermann really found ears and hearts attuned to his lovely melodies and his cembalo rang out so much the sweeter.

It was to this Café that Buchholz, Deborah and their friends came one Saturday evening—at a late hour, when they thought that the regular costumers, the business men, would have finished their dinner and gone home with their wives—to celebrate the completion of Buchholz's "Mother."

A little money was on hand this time. Deborah had brought along her weekly earnings, Freier had promised to contribute some money also, and Moscovici declared that he would certainly bring the proprietor of the Madison Art Gallery along, who would acquire every one of Buchholz's works immediately and pay for all the drinks. The café was steamy and smoky as the result of the various Roumanian dishes which were cooking in the kitchen; veritable balls of smoke formed overhead. The tables were still all occupied by the business men and their wives or women friends. Their rapid financial ascent was attested to by their silk shirts, whose cuffs ex-

tended below their coat sleeves. Replete with rich food, intoxicated with wine, put into a sentimental mood by the Wallachian and Jewish melodies which had resounded from Bermann's cembalo, they were flushed of face, bright-eyed, and, being well-disposed, they caressed with both eyes and hands the women who sat beside them. Out of the clouds of smoke Bermann's cembalo resounded, and occasionally a broad-shouldered Jew from Bessarabia accompanied the music by snapping his fingers, by shouting or by a humming "*Tarara*," at the same time refreshing himself by tasting a salted almond or by bestowing an intimate caress upon his charming companion.

When Buchholz and his friends entered the Café, they were greeted by a group of artists, writers and poets from the East Side, who were assembled at a corner table. The leader of this group was the Jewish author, Mendel, the man with the nobly-shaped head which looked as though it had been carved in ivory.

A glorious light radiated from his black, sparkling eyes. He was a middle-aged man, slight, youthful in vigor and posture. His thin body seemed to be consumed by a constant thirst which smoldered within him—the thirst for love, comradeship, humanity. His eager face expressed sympathetic cordiality, and his eyes glowed with infinite kindness and human weakness as do those of little children.

Mendel was in the happiest of moods, as the empty bottles which stood on the table proved, and also his empty pockets, which he turned inside out, trying to find enough money to give a tip to the waiters and the musicians. His heart yearned for women and for love, and early in the evening he had announced in a loud voice that he had made a discovery: "Without women the world is empty, even though wine and poetry are available."

When he saw Deborah enter with Buchholz, he called them to his table even while they were still some distance away, and invited Deborah to sit down next to him, in order

to prove to the business men, as he said, that the most beautiful woman of them all (he assured Deborah with solemn oaths that she *was* the most beautiful) was sitting with the authors, and not with them....

It was late now, and the usual visitors, the business men who had taken their supper in the Café, were gone by this time. There remained only the group at Mendel's table, and the scattered couples who were sitting in dark corners. All of them were enveloped in cigar- and cigarette-smoke. The atmosphere in the café became cozy, and a feeling of mingled strangeness and familiarity engulfed all the guests who were still in the Café. All of them were in a happy mood, some made so by the wine, others by the music. And, as often happens in such cafés when the hour grows late, all of them felt congenial, well-acquainted and intimate, as though they belonged to the same family.

Bermann loved to play for this late audience, and when his guests were in this sympathetic mood he brought forth the loveliest sounds from his cembalo. Fresh bottles of wine appeared on the tables. The cembalo moaned under the ministrations of Bermann's hands.

Suddenly a deep silence fell. Bermann was playing a folk song; the melody was one of those which may be heard in any village. For that very reason the song called forth the deepest feelings of sadness. There was something elegiac about it, and the strings of the cembalo sobbed, wept and pleaded. But they wept and moaned, not with unhappiness, not sorrowfully; no, they seemed to weep for very joy and delight. They expressed the infinity, the mystery of our happiness, the sadness and the brevity which marks our happiness, the death which awaits the end of our happiness.

Suddenly the door opens, and in walks Miss Forster; behind her is a lanky American who stoops in the doorway like a dry tree bending in the breeze. As though they are deliberately trying to raise the happy mood up to a new pitch, they enter the Café with gay laughter on their lips; obviously this

is not their first stop. They want to sit down at one of the empty tables, but Miss Forster notices Buchholz and Deborah in the crowd, and she leads the American to their table immediately. There she introduces him to Buchholz:

"See, Gregory, here is my friend Buchholz, the greatest of living American sculptors. All he needs is a little publicity, and you are to furnish that, of course. And she"—she pointed to Deborah—"is his little friend, every inch a Russian. The gentlemen are all friends of mine—poets, authors, scholars and thinkers.

"And this is our old friend Gregory, you know, the tall chap on the *Journal*, an Irishman from head to foot—as you might know from his green tie. And I am Miss Forster. May we sit with you? Do introduce your friends!"

Buchholz introduced them. Miss Forster was friendly to every one, and flattered them all. When Mendel's name was mentioned, she said, in a pleased voice: "You are the famous poet?" and won him over completely from the very first moment. In fact, she told every one whom she met that she had heard of him, and was so glad to know him. Her hearty handshake, her pleasant smile, and her friendly, radiant black eyes made them all feel as though they had known her for a long time. They were glad to make room for her at their table.

"Every one who joins our group has to pay an entrance fee," called out Mendel with a merry laugh.

"What kind of fee?" asked Miss Forster.

"Either a kiss or a bottle of wine. You can take your own choice."

"You may have both," answered Miss Forster, with a smile.

"No, not both." Mendel insisted on the terms of his bond. "Well then, for all I care, make it wine, two bottles, no, three bottles of wine for our guests! They are fashionable guests, important Americans. The mister there is a famous American author, and the miss is a great—Well, what kind of 'great' are you anyway?" Mendel interrupted himself with a question.

"Friend," laughed Miss Forster.

"No, a great beauty, my word on it!"

Soon fresh bottles of wine stood on the table. Bermann's playing inspired not only Miss Forster, but even the uncommunicative American, and he ordered a cognac for himself.

"We'll stay out all night tonight! We won't go to bed at all; tonight we mustn't go home! We have two such great beauties at our table,"—suddenly Mendel embraced them both —"no, we won't go to bed at all. Let's go to Greenwich Village! Let's go to Buchholz's studio, yes. Let's go to Buchholz's studio to see his new masterpiece. Have you heard that he has created a new masterpiece? They say that she"—he pointed to Deborah—"was his model. It is said to be an ingenious piece of work."

"I know that he is a great artist," said Miss Forster.

"Then, will you go with us to Buchholz's studio?"

"Anything you say," answered Miss Forster.

"Now that's what I like! That's what I call a real girl! 'Anything you say!' I love you, I love you for those words. People, why don't you say something? We have two beautiful women with us, the most beautiful women in all the world! She"—he pointed to Deborah—"is like a bud, a sweet, dewy bud, and she"—he pointed to Miss Forster—"is a rose, a red rose in full bloom. Just see how perfect she is! She is like a rose, a full-blown rose. People, why do you sit there like clods? I don't like you! Do look at our rose! And this bud! Why don't you say something? Devil take you!"

"What do you want us to do?" asked Freier earnestly.

"Everything is permitted today, anything at all, do you hear, anything! Buchholz, you must not be a defender of the rights of private property. I am a Socialist. Today I am a Socialist. I don't believe in private property. Everything is permitted today, everything"—he embraced Miss Forster and stroked Deborah's hair at the same time. "You shall have a kiss —you, my little bud!"

All of this jollity did not seem to have any effect on Buchholz; he was sad and serious. Something had happened to him

during the last half hour. He stared at Miss Forster constantly, devouring her with his eyes. He had met her before; he knew her; but suddenly she seemed different; suddenly she made a deep impression on him.

Sometimes an accidental remark of a stranger quite changes our point of view. Mendel's observation had opened Buchholz's eyes.

Miss Forster really did look like a rose this evening, a full-blown rose. Her dress was deep red in color, close-fitting, revealing the lovely lines of her body, the supple grace with which she moved. To Buchholz it scarcely seemed like a dress at all, but rather like a soft drapery—transparent, seductive. Her black hair was smoothly parted, and coiled about her head —but coiled so loosely that it seemed about to tumble down at any moment, to fall like black shadows about throat and shoulders. Her eyes were slant Oriental eyes, mouth and chin so sweet that they quite compensated for the light lines etched across the forehead. Yes, she was a full-blown rose indeed, and no longer young; her keen, intelligent eyes testified that her spirit too had attained to maturity, and this added to her charm.

Unconsciously Buchholz began to draw mental comparisons between Deborah who was sitting next to him and Miss Forster; Deborah with her curly hair and her slender young throat looked like a child compared with this woman.

She was a child, an immature woman, whom he knew, liked and loved, and who was precious to him, but precious as his own blood was precious to him—his sister, perhaps, or his mother. He simply could not imagine life without her.

But across from him there was this woman, this unattainable woman, whose mature body enticed him, whose experienced soul suggested enchanted worlds, strange and unknown to him.

Buchholz did not feel as though he was doing wrong in thinking these thoughts; on the contrary, it seemed to him as though Deborah were so much part of himself that he was not

thinking these thoughts alone, but together with her. He visualized himself with Deborah forever, quite as though they were one being; and it seemed to him that he was thinking these beautiful thoughts together with Deborah, these thoughts which he so much desired to think, these warm, these pleasant thoughts! How sweet to kindle his imagination by long contemplation of her lovely body, her radiant, intelligent eyes, the complete charm of this lovely woman!

Buchholz was conscious of every movement Miss Forster made, and quite devoured her with his glances. He did not envy Mendel nor hold a grudge against him for having kissed her. One did not envy Mendel nor hold a grudge against him about anything; everything was permitted Mendel. All that Buchholz desired was to sit as close to Miss Forster as Mendel did, so that he might breathe in her enticing fragrance.

He was in so great a state of ecstasy that he could not say a word. He sat quietly, and stared spellbound at Miss Forster's bare, well-rounded arms: "So full and round," he thought, "yet so light, so graceful! And her fingers are so slender, so aristocratic—as though the substance had been removed to make them more slender."

When she stood up, Buchholz could see her feet; and he noticed how lightly and gracefully she walked, and how small her feet were: "That mature and vibrant body, and those child-feet, Chinese feet! Why, I know her very well, I have known her for a long time," he reminded himself. "Why did I never really see her before?"

Hitherto, something alien, something unapproachable about this woman had warned him to keep his distance. And her face, the tiny wrinkles about the eyes, and that strange deep line drawn round the throat—all were testimonials of age and experience—in fact, Buchholz had regarded her as an aging maiden lady.

But now the very characteristics which, up to this time, had seemed unattractive to him, lent her a peculiar charm. That

strange line round her throat! "How much suffering that expresses!" he thought; "it looks as though some one had once tried to strangle her with a fine silk thread."

What had seemed alien and strange to him before attracted him now. "She is here with us, and yet she is withdrawn, she allows Mendel to kiss her, still she keeps us all at a distance. Even now there is a barrier, an invisible barrier between her and the rest of us. That is womanly pride, that is womanly dignity!"

Unconsciously he drew mental comparisons between her and Deborah, and decided: "A girl of our class will never know where to draw the line...."

He was ashamed of this thought. Suddenly sorry for Deborah, he made an effort to decide just what her own peculiar charms might be. Quite unconsciously he drew closer to her, stroking her hair. But his eyes were fastened on Miss Forster's face, and once again on the fine line round her neck. He felt as though this line cast a strange light upon her face, the light of the spirit, of intelligence—of everything which Buchholz so desired for himself, for which he had so much respect.

He arose, and timidly approached Miss Forster's group. Then, in a hesitating voice, he said:

"I would like to show you my new work. I beg of you, do come to my studio." Face—eyes—lips—all pleaded with her to come.

"Gladly. When do you want us to come?"

"Today, right now. In half an hour the dawn will begin to break; then the light will be very good."

"Splendid, we'll go to your studio. Gregory! Come here, Gregory!" She called her American friend, who sat silent, in a corner, watching Mendel as he kissed the women. "I've been neglecting you all evening, haven't I? You took me out for a good time, and I'm neglecting you! A fine companion I turned out to me! But blame my Jewish blood for that. Or my home in the old country. When I meet my fellow-countrymen, I

simply don't need you. I'm so much at home with them, and with you—well, the Anglo-Saxon atmosphere seems cold and strange. You understand, don't you? This is where I really belong, with them. Just look at them; aren't they wonderful?"

"They're all right, Isabel," answered Gregory, squeezing Miss Forster's hand. How Buchholz envied him.

"You must go to his studio with me! I want you to see his work; he is a great artist, and I want you to help him. Do you understand?"

"Very well, if you like."

And Buchholz ran on ahead, impatiently, fairly flying up the stairs to his studio. He would gladly have given up his hope of immortality for the sake of gaining recognition in Miss Forster's eyes. He tore the cloths, which served as curtains, off the windows. A strange light, a mingling of day and night, crept in. Buchholz arranged his sculptures for his visitors, "Samson" to the right, "Adam" to the left, and in the middle of the foreground, his latest work, the "Mother."

In the gray light of dawn the figures assumed a fantastic appearance. Their outlines were blurred. The figures seemed to be floating in the heavy gray shadows which filled the studio now, and they emerged like sphinxes out of vapory fog. "Samson" in his mighty strength, laughing and playing like a child. "Adam," mystic, with six pairs of hands upraised like the branches of trees. The "Mother," with her strange, long legs, the "Mother," whose eyes were a challenge, the "Mother," a heroine, protecting some one—all of them looked like god, like the old gods, whom men had once worshiped.

Miss Forster had been looking at the sculptures, long and silently. She said nothing, but her face was flushed with enthusiasm. Now she went up to Buchholz, took both his hands in her own, and said:

"You are a great artist, you have the primitive force of a god."

Buchholz was silent. He looked straight into her eyes for

the first time. His underlip trembled with excitement. His teeth chattered nervously, he was confused, and he held her hand in his for a long time.

She blushed as he looked at her, she lowered her eyes, and gently drew her tiny fingers away. But Mendel, who had noticed everything, shouted:

"Give him a kiss. Yes, you must kiss him, he deserves it. He is a great artist."

Then Miss Forster went red as a schoolgirl, and said, with a laugh:

"I don't even know whether he wants me to."

"Just see how eager he is!"—Mendel drew their heads together, and said to her: "Kiss him, you must kiss him. He deserves it."

Buchholz fairly drank in her subtle fragrance—was intoxicated by it.

Their faces were red, their hearts pounded painfully.

But Miss Forster regained control of herself immediately. Withdrawing from Buchholz's arms, she went up to Gregory.

"Dear Gregory," she said, "you must help! You must do this for me! You'll really be accomplishing a great deal that's useful and worth while!"

"All right, Isabel," said Gregory, nonchalantly, and drew out his notebook, "give me the facts. How old is he?"—he pointed to Buchholz—"what has he been doing up to this time?"

"The young man here," Moscovici interrupted, "threw an art patron downstairs, even though there wasn't a crust of bread in the house, simply because the man proposed that he make a compromise with his art, and create works which were not to his liking."

"That's the stuff. A first-class story for the first page of my paper!" cried Gregory, really inspired for the first time. "A hungry artist throws an art patron downstairs, and refuses to make any compromise with his art—that's the story!"

And he made notes feverishly.

When they left—it was bright daylight by this time—Freier went up to Miss Forster and said irrelevantly:

"I am not responsible for the way he"—he pointed to Mendel—"behaved all evening."

"Idiot! *I* am responsible. I alone am responsible for everything!" cried Mendel.

The Great Fortune

Several days later a Sunday issue of a New York newspaper carried a story about Buchholz. The story was devoted to Buchholz's life to a greater extent than to his art, and the heading extended across the entire page, reading:

"New York's Greatest Sculptor Lives Obscurely in a Garret."

The story told how Buchholz lived, and how he earned his living: "During the day he works in a laundry on the East Side to earn money for his bit of bread, at night he models his masterpieces in clay. He has never attended art school, his works are entirely the result of his own intuition. They are distinguished by a tremendous primitive vitality."

Of course Gregory had not forgotten to tell how Buchholz had received various offers from dealers and patrons, all of which he rejected, and that he therefore had to do physical labor in order to make his living. "His beautiful young wife works in a shop," it went on to say, "only because these offers were opposed to his artistic ideals." Then followed a detailed report of the affair with the art patron whom Buchholz was said to have kicked downstairs.

To the story were added photographic reproductions of Buchholz himself, his studio, and his works, which Miss Forster had made for her friend Gregory. The "Samson," which extended the full length of the newspaper page, was most effective, even in the photograph, the others less so, as they

were not so clearly reproduced. The story closed with the challenge: "Who will help put the great American artist in the public eye by means of an exhibition of his masterpieces?"

On the very same day Buchholz received a visit from the director of the Madison Art Gallery, Mr. Davidson, whose visit had so often been announced by Moscovici, without having materialized. Davidson was a little, thin, energetic Jew with a large diamond pin in his tie. It turned out that what Moscovici had said was true; Davidson was ready to buy all of Buchholz's works, all of them together, not only those which had already been completed, but also all of those which he was to complete within the next ten years. He mentioned tens of thousands of dollars, and promised Buchholz an introduction to The White House, and even to persuade the President to have Buchholz do a portrait bust of him; then Buchholz would also receive orders from Rockefeller, Jacob Schiff, and other "important millionaires." Davidson drew forth a contract and gave it to Buchholz to sign on the dotted line.

But Miss Forster was standing guard. She had enjoined upon Buchholz not to sign anything, telling him that she would seek out the right people for him herself.

During the next few days other people came, too, looked at Buchholz's works, and whispered together. They handed him more papers to sign, and when Buchholz refused, they left. Soon things quieted down again, and nothing more happened for quite a long time.

A few weeks later Miss Forster came to the studio; she brought with her an older woman and two men. One of these was Gregory, who had started all the uproar; he and the other American scrutinized Buchholz's sculptures very seriously. The stranger was an art critic—Miss Forster had whispered to Buchholz that he was the famous Davis. He was as uncommunicative as Gregory. For a long time he regarded Buchholz's sculptures without saying a word; but when he saw the "Mother," a look of interest came to his eyes, and his face lighted up. He even waxed enthusiastic about this work; an

enthusiasm which he expressed by knocking the ashes out of his pipe hurriedly, and by filling the bowl anew. Long and earnestly did he regard the statue, scrutinized it from all sides, and then turned to the elderly woman beside him, the one with the tanned face (Buchholz was puzzled as to how the face of the lady could be sun-tanned in mid-winter).

"Without any doubt, this young man possesses an original and decided talent, of unique primitive strength, deep feeling and sensitive intuition, but undeveloped and rough. In such cases strength is often converted into brutality."

Hereupon he drew Buchholz into the conversation and asked him where he had learned to draw. When Davis learned that Buchholz had really not attended art school at all, but had merely had a few instructions in drawing at a Jewish evening school, he turned to the lady:

"All the young man needs is a little travel in Europe—Rome and Paris—so that he may learn what others have accomplished before him, and won't regard himself as a second Columbus every time he gets a new idea."

"And what do you think about giving an exhibition of the works he has completed up to the present time?" asked Miss Forster, in a voice such as one uses in asking a physician about his patient.

"Of course, these things are works of art, particularly the figure of the girl. Courage and self-confidence are not lacking in his nature; on the contrary, he is a little too richly endowed with them. A little more discipline, young man!"—he turned to Buchholz. "Don't let the exhibition turn your head!" he admonished jokingly.

The visitors took leave of Buchholz and Deborah in a most cordial manner. The elderly woman with the winter sun-tan congratulated Buchholz, and, as she left, bade him thank Mr. Davis for his good advice, and said that they would see what could be done for him. Mr. Davis pressed his hand cordially, with the remark: "Remember that America has been discov-

ered. You will see how much has already been done when you get to Rome, to Florence, to Paris."

Buchholz did not know what he meant by this. But when Miss Forster took leave of Deborah, she embraced her and whispered to her joyously:

"The seven lean years are over, little Deborah; the seven lean years are over...."

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A few days later Miss Forster brought the couple the happy news that the woman who had been to visit them a few days before was a social worker of the East Side, and that, on the recommendation of the art critic, she had succeeded in obtaining a stipend of five thousand dollars for a two years' trip to Europe for Buchholz—a stipend donated by a well-known Jewish philanthropist who was chiefly interested in helping New York artists. "Little Deborah is to go with you, of course," Miss Forster added. Furthermore, Mr. Davis had persuaded a gallery on Fifth Avenue to give an exhibition.

Miss Forster told them in detail and with delighted enthusiasm what had happened; how, following upon Gregory's story, they had succeeded, first, in winning the interest of the social worker. Then the social worker had sought out the millionaire, and he had sent Mr. Davis so that he might give them a professional opinion. The final result was a letter from Mr. Davis and the social worker to Miss Forster in which they asked her to tell the sculptor the outcome of their efforts.

"And now, my little Deborah, there's to be no more 'shop' for you, no more work and no more worry! Now you're to have Europe; Rome, Florence and Paris, Paris with all that your heart desires. What have you to say now?" she asked gleefully.

Deborah did not answer. A feeling of despondency which she could not understand had crept into her heart, and she was silent.

"You don't say anything?" asked Miss Isabel.

"I don't know," answered Deborah. "I do understand that all of this means a great stroke of fortune for Buchholz, but it does not make me happy."

"Why?"

"I would have wished it to have happened differently.... I pictured it all so differently," said Deborah, half to herself, "so differently."

"At any rate Paris is very beautiful, and you'll soon cultivate the taste for it," said Miss Forster, a bit coldly.

"I know. I thank you very much, you know that. We owe you such a great debt of gratitude. You have done so much for us!" Moved to tears, Deborah pressed Miss Forster's hands.

"Don't worry about that, you will thank me when you get to Paris," answered Miss Forster, put on her jacket, and went away, so it seemed to Buchholz, in a somewhat estranged mood.

"Why did you do that? Why? Why?" Buchholz strode about the room in great excitement after Miss Forster had left.

"I don't know why; that was the way I felt about it." Deborah, who saw her mistake, apologized.

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It was still difficult for Buchholz to believe that he had "held the winning ticket," as he always referred to his good fortune. He never doubted Miss Forster's words; everything that Miss Forster said was gospel truth for him; but the fact that she had come to visit him, that she had brought him the news, that she took an interest in him and concerned herself about him, that meant more to Buchholz than the winning ticket itself.

"But no doubt something will prevent it from really materializing," he said to himself incredulously, "and everything will be ruined; yes, some misfortune will occur; since I am a *schlemihl*, the philanthropist's ships will be sunk, and he will become a poor man. Or a war will break out, or New York will be destroyed by an earthquake. When it is a matter of

depriving me of good fortune, then anything can happen, even a natural catastrophe, just so that luck will be against me."

But one morning, on a glorious day in spring, the kind of day when, according to the novelists, all great strokes of fortune occur, the postman brought Buchholz a registered letter. Within it was enclosed (Buchholz couldn't believe his eyes) a check for five hundred dollars, and a short note from the secretary of the philanthropist which said that the money was sent to enable Buchholz to go ahead with his preparations for the trip. The note closed with the request to inform the office how he would prefer to receive the rest of the money, whether in quarterly or half-yearly payments.

When Buchholz received the letter with the check, Deborah was not at home, as she had left for the shop. In his first moment of surprise, he seized his overcoat and rushed out to find her.

When he reached the street a fresh spring wind greeted him. The sun shone like gold, making the streets look as though they had been decked out for some activity; the warm rays dried up the damp sidewalks and absorbed the grimy moisture of the day before; it seemed to want to efface the last traces of winter. The decorated windows, the displays in the stores, all of the turmoil in the streets, appealed to Buchholz as having been placed there, not for business purposes, but merely to serve as toys for a day of celebration. He ran through the streets like a tornado, keeping his hand cramped up in the pocket which contained the letter and the check. He wanted to stop every passer-by to tell him what had happened, and to show him the check—he felt that he was richer than any of them; it seemed to him that, with the money he had in his pocket, he could buy the whole world.

Down in his heart, he felt the stirring of an ardent desire. For a moment it seemed to him that he was hurrying not to Deborah, but to Miss Forster; it was she whom he would take with him, it was she who was going to walk beside him down

the streets, down Fifth Avenue. They would go shopping together, make purchases for their trip to Europe—trunks, shirts, shoes, coats; they would eat in a smart restaurant together today, and this evening they would go to the theater, and sit side by side; he would feel her breath upon his face, he would even hold her hand, he would press it in his.... Buchholz stood still, roused himself from his day-dreams, and reproached himself:

"What a good-for-nothing fellow I am, after all! A rascal! Of what am I thinking. How dare I think that?"

But even while he was heaping reproaches upon himself, he remembered once more the fragrance which surrounded Miss Forster, the fragrance of deep-red carnations....

With a bound he was at the shop, and had them call Deborah out.

"You must come with me immediately, put on your things and come!"

"What has happened?" asked Deborah, frightened.

"Just this"—Buchholz showed her the letter with the check.

Deborah couldn't understand why he wanted her to leave the shop.

"When I come home this evening will be time enough to plan what we must do."

Her indifference offended him; he wanted to celebrate his good fortune today, and she was destroying his mood. He shouted at her:

"I don't want you to work! You don't need to work any more! It annoys me to think you are still working."

Deborah was sorry to have dampened Buchholz's joy; to conciliate him, she smiled at him. She went back into the workroom, asked to have the rest of the day off, put on her wraps, and went away with him.

"Now, what shall we do first? With what shall we begin?" she asked, snuggling up to him with a sweet smile as in the good old days, in order to bring him back into good humor.

"Let's not do anything right away. Let's just wander about

the streets and look into the windows as though we didn't have a cent of money, just as we used to do! But if we see something that we like very very much, then we'll buy it." Buchholz was as happy as a child.

"No, Chaskel, first we shall buy a big, big bouquet of flowers for Miss Forster; we owe every bit of our good fortune to her, after all."

"Yes, Deborah, yes," cried Buchholz with great enthusiasm, and embraced her.

"Come, Deborah, hurry, we have to cash the check, we haven't any money, you know! I love you! I love you so much." Standing in the middle of the street, he stroked her hair fondly.

CHAPTER XXXV

Caught in the Net of Joy

Buchholz was very busy getting ready for his exhibition. As he consulted with Miss Forster about everything, he was home very rarely. This seemed only natural to Deborah. "Miss Forster knows so much about art," she said to herself.

She was not jealous of Miss Forster, for she respected her too much and esteemed her too highly to dare to be suspicious or jealous of her. She was only sorry that she could not help Buchholz herself, and be with him all day as Miss Forster was.

Of course Deborah wasn't working any more, although she would have liked to do so. She missed her work for two reasons; in the first place her life was dull without it, and, in the second place, she still found it impossible to believe that it was no longer necessary for her to go to the shop. It seemed to her that she was living in idleness. But Buchholz made such a fuss about it that Deborah didn't even dare to hint that she wanted to go back to work, and avoided talking to him about the matter at all.

"We'll be going away soon. How long will we be here anyway? Only until after the exhibition. We must get ready for our journey," was what he was constantly preaching.

Whether it was that Deborah couldn't believe that such happiness could possibly be in store for her, whether it was that she had a premonition—at any rate, she was sure that she would not go with Buchholz, that something would happen. She was afraid to think of it, to be sure, but, even in imagination, she couldn't feel at home in the thought that her working days were over, and that a new life was to begin for her.

Why she felt this way she did not know. She had no reason to doubt Buchholz or to suspect him in any way. Buchholz's relation to Miss Forster seemed quite natural to her; she had the same feeling of enthusiastic respect and gratitude for her that Buchholz had. And yet—"Why do I feel so despondent? And why, no matter how often Buchholz refers to our trip together, am I unable to believe that this trip will really materialize? And why don't I make any preparations for the journey?"

It seemed as though the poverty in which Deborah had been living up to this time had laid its heavy hand upon her, and said: "I'll never let you get away from me."

These days, when she no longer went to the shop to work, but simply sat and waited, were the most trying, the unhappiest ones for Deborah. Buchholz could not understand her mood. He went about basking in the sunshine of happiness which seemed to have begun to beam down upon him, but Deborah sat there like a mourner, quiet, silent, sad. Her accustomed happy smile that had always given him so much pleasure had vanished. Only a wintry semblance of this smile had remained on her little lips, which were distorted as though she were about to cry. Her large, bright eyes grew larger and brighter.

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Buchholz knew no rest or peace after he had once begun to regard Miss Forster in this new way. Nothing helped: not valid objections, nor firm resolutions, nor self-reproach, nor attempts at self-vindication. Buchholz wasn't the kind of man to live by resolutions. He was at the mercy of his emotions, whatever these emotions were at any given moment.... Scarcely had he settled upon a definite course of action, scarcely had he made a decision, when this decision was put to naught by his emotions.

He resolved to live for Deborah alone, and to exclude all other possibilities; and immediately the longing for Isabel came upon him, and actually seemed to gnaw at his heart. The

world about him seemed dead, life was uninteresting, without zest. What happiness can life offer if it excludes that passionate desire for the tantalizing fragrance surrounding Isabel?

When, on the other hand, he had yielded utterly to this longing, he was seized by remorse and conscience-stricken; and, more than that, a frightening feeling of spiritual vacuity came over him. He felt as though the bottom had dropped out of everything. The only way to feel solid ground under his feet once more was to rush to find Deborah, and to make love to her....

Today, for instance, Miss Forster had been especially kind. After they had come to an agreement about the arrangement of his sculptures in the gallery, she had gone to a smart tea-room with him. He had drunk in the subtle fragrance of her body, and he was happier than he had ever been in his life.

Arrived at home—Miss Forster had sent him home to the "little Deborah"—he found Deborah sitting alone in the darkened studio. When Buchholz saw her disconsolate shadow on the wall, the shadow which revealed her mood more clearly than she herself did, so ardent a feeling for her arose in him, that he went up to her, and said in a tenderly reproachful voice:

"Why are you sitting alone in the dark?"

"It's all right"—she tried to smile at him. Buchholz knew by looking at Deborah's eyes what she had been trying to conceal, without success.

"You were crying!" He pulled her to him, and tasted the salty tears on his lips when he kissed her on the eyes. "Why did you cry?"

"It's all right. I wanted to cry a little," she reassured him, smiling through her tears.

And because he was so touched by this, Buchholz made a solemn decision that from now on, once and for all, no one would exist for him except Deborah. At this moment he recalled how much she meant to him, and he remembered how utterly she was devoted to him. And with that deep tender-

ness of which he was capable when his emotions and temperament were aroused, he now set about convincing Deborah of his own newly-awakened conviction.

"I have bought the trunks for our voyage, and you sit here crying."

"I don't know whether I'll go at all, Chaskel," she answered.

Buchholz sat down on the floor at her feet.

"Why do you feel that way, Deborah? Tell me!"

"I don't know why, but that's what my heart says."

"Your heart, your heart is my worst enemy! I would like to tear it out of your body!"

Deborah had to laugh at this.

"Do you think that I'll go without you? Not one step without you! They can keep their money! I'd rather engrave tombstones, or haul coal."

Deborah said nothing.

He folded his hands, looked deeply into her eyes, and pleaded with her in the tender tones which she could never resist:

"Deborah, Deborah"—He spoke her name as a child would call out "mother," and looked deeply into her eyes as he spoke.

"What is it?"

"Why do you say such things? Is it my fault? Have I done you any wrong? Tell me!"

He asked his question so naïvely and innocently that all the protective instincts of a mother awoke in Deborah's heart:

"No." She shook her head, smiling gravely.

"But then why do you say such things? What would my life be without you? What am I without you?" He pressed his head against her, and caressed her feet with his strong hands.

She took his head in her hands, and looked earnestly at him with her big, tear-filled eyes.

"Is that true, what you are telling me, Chaskel?"

"Why, what am I without you, Deborah?" Again he put his head down in her lap.

"Chaskel, dear, dear Chaskel!" Her fingers stroked his heavy hair caressingly, and her tears fell.

"But why am I so sad? I ought to be happy!" she said, half to herself.

"If you loved me, you would be happy, Deborah. We're both going to Europe, you know. Do you hear? We two are going..."

She leaned her head against his hair, and snuggled up against him like a little child:

"Chaskel, my Chaskel, just we two, all alone?"

"We two, we two, nobody except just we two," he repeated.

She settled down in his arms.

And again there came a night of passionate forgetfulness, when the starry heavens seemed to descend into the room. Again he carried her round in his arms. He sat at her feet, and he depicted their future together, their ocean trip, how they would live in a little apartment in Montmartre in Paris, there where all the artists live; how they would wander about on the boulevards, and sit in the cafés with artists from all corners of the world; how they would travel through Europe, see big old cities and the treasures in their museums—two years, two years without any worry, two years of joy and happiness. They saw themselves like two balls of bright flame in a sea of happiness in Paris. Paris sparkled, gleamed and glowed in the distance like a glow-worm in the night, the night of Buchholz's future.

Why not? Deborah tried to convince herself. For the moment she seemed forcibly to have vanquished her burden of poverty. With all her strength she threw off the yoke of duty which rested upon her. "Why shouldn't I have the right to be happy? Why haven't I the same right as other people!"

And so did Buchholz, with his stories of an enchanted future, relieve Deborah of all sadness and doubt.

He told her of his plans for the future, the development of his work, the freedom from worry, and the new artistic atmosphere. Stimulated by a study of great works of art, encouraged by Deborah's enthusiasm, he saw himself creating great sculptures.

"You inspired me with your faith in me when I had become a good-for-nothing. And when no one believed in me, then you believed in me."

Deborah could not bear any more. Again tears streamed from her eyes.

"Then why is my heart so sad? Why don't I believe that that's the way it will be?" she said, and held out her arms in a pleading gesture.

"Believe, only believe, only believe!" He kissed the tears from her eyes. "It will be *that* way, or not at all," said Buchholz as he arose. He spoke in a solemn voice, as though he were taking a sacred oath.

And Deborah believed him.

. . . . . .

He gave her no peace the next day. Deborah had to get dressed early in the morning and go shopping with him for all that was needed for the journey (he really hadn't thought much about it till now). He bought dresses and lingerie, and told her to choose all kinds of things, both practical and impractical. He was delighted with every purchase and explained how necessary and useful every single thing he bought would be on the trip. Inspired by his happiness, Deborah gradually began to accept the idea of their trip in earnest. The magic of his words banished all doubts and dispersed her melancholy. And the new life which awaited her began to cast its radiant beams down upon her, and to help draw her into this new world, a world which she regarded as not really destined for her at all....

After the shopping tour, Buchholz took her with him to

the gallery where his exhibition was to be held a few days later.

In the gallery they met Miss Forster. She was talking with the newspaper reporters, being charming to them, inspiring them with enthusiasm for Buchholz's work. As Deborah watched her, she realized how much Miss Forster was doing for Buchholz; the thought came to her how good Miss Forster really was—and she felt most grateful to her. Only she had no way of expressing her gratitude.

Deborah felt constrained in the big elegant rooms which housed Buchholz's sculptures, and, ill at ease, she stood to one side. Miss Forster noticed her, went up to her, put her arm affectionately about her, and drew her into a corner; there she asked her:

"Are you all ready for the trip, little Deborah?"

"Yes, Buchholz is buying everything for me," answered Deborah, embarrassed, "but I don't know, I feel as though . . ."

"What, little Deborah?"

"I don't know. Have I really a right to all this?" said Deborah.

"You have a right to it, little Deborah, you certainly have. You worked hard for this."

Miss Forster's words touched Deborah deeply. She looked at her, and said, without overmuch deliberation:

"You are the one who ought to be going to Paris with Buchholz. You are so kind, so kind. . . ."

"I?" It was Miss Forster's turn to be embarrassed, and she laughed nervously. "Buchholz isn't going to take me, of course. I am not his sweetheart. Why—why, you sweet little thing," and she embraced Deborah impulsively.

The Exhibition

THEN came the day of the exhibition. The newspaper which had first discovered Buchholz was naturally interested in making the affair a great success. Davis, the critic, was of course inclined favorably toward Buchholz and his exhibition. As a result, there was a big crowd at the opening; prominent personalities, including artists, art patrons, critics, and intelligentsia in general. All of them were eager to see the star of first magnitude who had arisen on the East Side. Several politicians of the quarter were also present, eager to turn the exhibition into a "Jewish triumph."

The philanthropist who had granted Buchholz the stipend drove up in his big automobile accompanied by his secretary and the social worker. By this time all who were present knew that the millionaire was sending the artist abroad for two years, and all of them tried to ingratiate themselves with him, and were pleased if they managed to inveigle a smile from him.

Like all newly-discovered "stars," Buchholz had made no enemies as yet; every one greeted the new artist in friendly fashion and tried to outdo the others in enthusiasm.

The gallery was decorated with palms and flowers. Miss Forster had seen to that. Between the palms the heroic "Samson" arose, with his mighty shoulders, his muscular back, his strong chest, and his naively-smiling face; beside him was the "Adam" with his six pairs of hands, into which the enthusiastic visitors tried to read a great variety of symbolic meanings. There were also other less important works of Buchholz's—heads, torsos and figurines; and, in the center, surrounded by

huge chrysanthemums, stood the "Mother"; she seemed to be emerging from among the flowers. Here, lighted from above, the statue appeared to good advantage for the first time. This girl with her frank, challenging expression, whose resemblance to Deborah now became quite obvious, this girl with tumbled hair and the big eyes peering out from among the curls, looked as though she were boasting of her little, firm, well-developed body, which was curved like that of a pregnant woman.... This woman seemed proud of her pregnancy.... Her wide-open eyes gazed out upon the world triumphantly. Her little mouth was tightly closed, and her lips were distorted as with pain—it was as though her hour of travail was upon her, even now.

Naturally every one preferred the "Samson." There was a figure they could understand. But the connoisseurs and the critics had referred to the "Mother" as an ingenious work. That was what the newspapers had printed, and that was what the famous art critic, Davis, had said. So every one paid more attention to the "Mother," and, because they were all afraid to betray their lack of understanding, they pretended to be delighted with it, and were quite lost in admiration.

Miss Forster was the very soul of the exhibition. She played the part of hostess, to a certain extent at least, and did so quite naturally, quite easily. She wore a blue velvet gown with a deep decolletage, which accentuated the loveliness of her bosom, of her slender arms, and her proudly-poised head with its simple coiffure.

She received the guests with a smile and guided them over to the sculptures, acting as interpreter when the occasion demanded, or saying nothing when silence was to be preferred. As for the embarrassed and bashful artist, who stood clumsily in a corner, with rapidly-beating heart, not knowing what to do with his big hands, feeling ill at ease in the new suit he was wearing, and new shoes that tortured him so that he constantly shifted from one foot to the other—as for him, Miss Forster knew when to bring him out of his hiding-place....

And when the philanthropist expressed a desire to meet the artist, she took Buchholz under her wing. The Croesus was talking with Mr. Davis, who had accompanied him in his tour of the gallery. Miss Forster managed the introduction with a gracious easy smile:

"This is our artist, the pride of the East Side!" The confident smile which is, as a rule, the prerogative of wealthy people, seemed to come to her lips naturally; her small white teeth sparkled, she was delightfully animated.

Buchholz flushed. He felt Miss Forster's bare arm against his, he was conscious of the intoxicating fragrance of her body. And that meant more to him than the entire exhibition and the millionaire put together;—if he could only have taken off his shoes and his stiff collar, which now began to chafe his neck unmercifully, his happiness would have been complete.

The philanthropist shook hands with him, congratulated him, and said he hoped that Buchholz would spend his time in Europe to advantage.

Buchholz nodded, without saying a word.

"I shall be glad to hear that you are making progress," the millionaire added.

Again Buchholz nodded without saying a word.

"And when you return, you will find your 'Samson' in my park at Long Branch. I hope that you will like the way it is to be placed. Mr. Davis will arrange everything."

Buchholz stared at him with wide-open eyes.

"I am quite sure that Mr. Buchholz, who is so young an artist, is proud of having one of his works included in your famous collection," Miss Forster answered for him, heartily, as Buchholz nodded without saying a word.

The millionaire shook hands with him, wished him "bon voyage," and left the exhibition.

Miss Forster turned from Buchholz to hurry over to the reporters, and enthusiastically told them of the millionaire's decision.

Soon every one in the hall knew that the millionaire had

bought the "Samson" for his park in Long Branch. This news called forth great excitement on the part of the visitors. All of them congratulated Buchholz, and—Miss Forster.

Miss Forster went up to Buchholz, who had withdrawn into a corner once more, and put her slender bare arm on his shoulder.

"I do believe that you were born with a silver spoon in your mouth, Buchholz," she said, and regarded him with sincere joy in her eyes. "To think of achieving a success like this at your very first exhibition!"

Buchholz unconsciously put out his hand to take hers. She surrendered it to him willingly, and said, deeply moved:

"I congratulate you from the bottom of my heart. I feel that you have received only what you really deserved...."

For a long time Buchholz held her little hand in his, and fixed his eyes on her tiny fingers.

"Your soul is in your finger-tips," he said, emboldened by his success.

Gently and slowly she withdrew her cool, little fingers from his warm hand, and her cheeks reddened.

As for Deborah, she hadn't really wanted to come to the exhibition. She had had a presentiment that she would feel strange and ill at ease there.

Wasn't she happy about Buchholz's success? Hadn't she been expecting it? Hadn't she hoped for it? Hadn't she been absolutely convinced that this day would come?—But when it did come, she wanted to run away from it. However, Buchholz was so excited, even on the day before the exhibition, and he begged her so fervently to accompany him, that she couldn't bear to refuse.

He had felt deserted and lost, and did not know how all this would end. It seemed to him that the exhibition would certainly be a failure; when the visitors saw his works they would laugh, and it would be obvious that he did not amount to anything. Every one who had seen his sculptures had praised them, the newspapers had written eulogies about his talent,

and yet he simply could not believe that they were worth anything, and that he would not appear ridiculous. Helplessly he looked to Deborah. When she realized that he needed her, she dressed, so that she might be ready to go with him, if he wanted her. She put on her new black silk dress, the one that Buchholz liked so well, hung her colored beads round her neck, arranged her curly hair as carefully as possible, and went to the exhibition.

But when she arrived, she saw so many and such fashionable people, that she soon began to feel strange and in the way. It wasn't long before Buchholz was called away; he had to be with fashionable people. So she withdrew into a dark corner where no one could see her.

She kept watching Miss Forster, and she saw how indefatigably she worked, how beautifully she was dressed, how radiantly happy she was about Buchholz's exhibition, how she received the guests, how she smiled at every one, and put them all in a good mood.

Deborah's first emotion was one of gratitude: "Why does she do all this? How kind she is!" Then a little feeling of jealousy gnawed at her heart: "Why did he have to have this exhibition, anyway?"

She remembered their former happy life together, how she had worked while Buchholz devoted himself to his art. "We would have been happier without all this," she thought, and it vexed her to think that matters had reached this point at all. But soon she called Buchholz to mind, and said to herself: "Can I keep Buchholz for myself alone, for always? Was he put into the world only for me? How stupid I am!"

But jealousy of Miss Forster was something which she could not suppress; she was jealous of this woman, because she could dress so beautifully, talk with such well-bred ease, flirt so charmingly, get on with people so well, and help Buchholz so much. "Who ever taught *me* any of those things?" she asked herself, and felt a pang of self-pity as she recalled the poverty in which she had spent her childhood.

Her face flushed, and her eyes began to snap. But she controlled herself, and tried to reason it out: "Why, how wicked I am! She is helping Buchholz so much. *She* was the one who got the money for him. *She* arranged for the exhibition, *she* is winning the public over for him. And I am so wicked toward her, I think such evil thoughts about her."

But she could not conquer that jealous feeling which made her rebellious because she was not able to do all that for Buchholz herself, because another woman was doing it instead. No, this feeling she could not conquer.

It took complete possession of her; she grew red, and bit her lips in anger:

"All of this was unnecessary. Things would probably have been much better for Buchholz without this," she tried to convince herself.

But deep down in her heart she knows that she is wrong, that this is what Buchholz needs, that an artist cannot exist without all these things. She knows what he was like formerly, and she knows what he is like now, how childishly happy he is about his trip to Europe; she knows how eager he was to have the exhibition take place, how he dreamed and planned for it at night.

Unconsciously a thought came to Deborah which made her tremble: "Miss Forster would be the right wife for Buchholz! She could help him with his life's work. What can I do? I've done everything now that I could do, to help. He doesn't need me any more, and he would be unhappy with me. How could I ever discuss art with him? Miss Forster is an educated woman, she knows so much and can help him—she can do a great deal for him!"

Suddenly it seems to her that her relationship to Buchholz is entirely changed. He is her brother, her good friend, who is very dear to her, and she begins to wonder which course would be of the greatest advantage to him. And, as she compares herself with Miss Forster, she comes to the conclusion that it would be better for Buchholz to go to Europe with

Miss Forster than with her.... Miss Forster is educated, is beautiful, is good, and knows how to get on with people; Buchholz will be happy with her.

"Dear Lord, what am I thinking, what am I thinking? I am bad, horrid! Buchholz belongs to me, and I'll never let any one take him from me! *I*, I found him myself, I understood him as no one else understood him. He said so himself. He will be unhappy without me, he won't be able to accomplish anything. He said so himself, himself"—her lips are trembling.

"But will he really be unhappy without me, if he is with her?" is the thought that keeps beating in Deborah's mind, and her heart contracts with pain. Then she sees Miss Forster, who smiles at her so cordially that all her doubts vanish.

"Well, where were you, little Deborah? This is the first time I've seen you! You're coming to my house with Buchholz this evening! I'm giving a party to celebrate Buchholz's success. You must be sure to come, all our friends will be there: Moscovici, Freier, and I invited Mendel too, as well as some others whom Buchholz ought to know."

Just then Miss Forster notices some one coming in:

"Excuse me, my dear, I must introduce Buchholz to this man! He's an editor, and can do a great deal for Buchholz. Good-by till this evening!"—and Miss Forster hurries away, takes him by the arm again, and leads him over to the editor.

"I won't go to her party!" thinks Deborah to herself.

And suddenly she feels depressed, for no reason at all. She leaves the gallery unobserved and goes out to the street. Fifth Avenue is thronged with people. Automobiles are racing this way and that. People come and go, and the sun is shining brightly, festively.

"And I am quite free, I don't have to go to work, but can go walking up and down Fifth Avenue just like any one else; and pretty soon I'm going to Paris. Buchholz told me so himself. He promised me that by all that is sacred!"

But just the same Deborah feels sad. Down the street, above Central Park, which is visible from here, she can see great

stretches of blue sky. And clouds—bright little clouds have gathered at one spot, blue little clouds appear and disappear. "But why am I thinking of clouds?"

Suddenly she is afraid. Her heart is filled with remorse, and she says to herself:

"Just the same that's how it will be; that's the way it will be!"

Insistently this phrase repeats itself to her inner consciousness.

"What a fool I am!" She laughs out loud, and tears come to her eyes.

"I must be alone, not see a soul!" She jumps on a bus that comes by, and rides home.

Houses, shops, people, automobiles, appear and disappear; noises arise and die down again, and unceasingly Deborah repeats to herself:

"That's how it will be anyway; that's how it will be anyway."

"But it *can't* be that way; why, it simply can't be that way" —once again tears come to her eyes, and she wipes them away with her handkerchief.

At home she throws herself down upon the bed, buries her face in the pillows, and murmurs:

"Why? Why?..."

All her experiences with Buchholz pass through her mind, and at the very last comes the memory of what she went through in the "institution" for his sake.

"But it cannot be, no, it cannot be!... Why do I think it is? Why do I think such dark thoughts?"

An idea. She gets up, washes her face carefully, arranges her hair, smooths her dress, brings out her prettiest gypsy shawl, Buchholz's favorite, puts on her earrings, and sits down in the armchair to wait for Buchholz.

She waits for half an hour, for an hour, but still he doesn't come. Again the sinister thoughts flit through her mind, like

birds of dark plumage; she wants to drive them away, but cannot do so.

Then she feels depressed again; she throws herself on the bed once more, and buries her face in the pillows. When she has succeeded in banishing the dark thoughts, she dries her tears, arranges her hair, looks in the mirror, and sits down in the armchair to wait for Buchholz.

Finally she hears a quick step on the stairs. Deborah's heart beats violently, she doesn't know why.

He enters, radiant with joy. He has unbuttoned his stiff collar, unlaced his boots, and holds his tie in his hand.

"I took Miss Forster home," he begins.

Then something occurs to him:

"Where were you? We were looking for you. We three were to have gone to supper together, but Miss Forster didn't want to go without you."

"I was very tired; and what could I do there, anyhow? I couldn't help you the way Miss Forster does. I can't talk to people the way she can, you know."

"Isn't she a wonderful person? Honestly, you just ought to hear how she can talk to every one! And the way she introduced me to the millionaire--so polite, and not a bit embarrassed! And when she smiled, she held every one in the hollow of her hand."

"You have much to thank her for. She has done a great, great deal for you," said Deborah.

"Do you feel that way too?" cried Buchholz joyfully. "Why, we couldn't have done anything without her. *She* did *everything*."

"Miss Forster can do a great deal for you. She is the only person in the world who can help you."

"Isn't that so? ... And did you notice her dress? Why, she's like the springtime itself! When people come and meet a woman as well-bred as she is, they are impressed immediately, aren't they?"

Once again something occurs to him, and he walks over to the thoughtful, silent Deborah.

"You aren't angry, are you, Deborah?"

"Why should I be angry?"

"Because I say these things about Miss Forster?"

"Miss Forster is a good and beautiful woman," said Deborah.

"Oh, how much I love you, Deborah! Even you don't know how much I love you," cried Buchholz eagerly. He knelt down in front of her, and kissed her passionately.

"Why do you kiss me like that?" she asked, vexed, and tried to push him gently away.

"I love you, you, only you, only you!"

But despair returned again, and stood at Deborah's side—waiting.

CHAPTER XXXVII

The Mother

Deborah was resolved not to go to Miss Forster's party. She formulated her decision: "If Buchholz refuses to go too, but stays at home with me, everything will be all right; in case he does go—in case he does go, I don't know what will happen."

Therefore, when Buchholz asked her to go with him to the party which Miss Forster was giving in his honor, she said, very decisively, "No!"

"Chaskel, I wish that we might be together this evening, we two, all alone, and no one else, just we two alone, as we used to be," she added in a whisper. "Just to celebrate our success. This evening is..." she did not finish her sentence.

"You are right, you are right," Buchholz's face was radiant with enthusiasm. "Today we really must be alone, just we two, alone."

Deborah said nothing. But, after a few moments, Buchholz remembered:

"But what about Miss Forster? She is counting on us, and she has invited people to meet us."

"We can send her a telegram that we are not feeling well. Write her that I am ill and that you cannot leave me."

"Very well, I'll send her a telegram or a letter by messenger boy. I'll write her that you do not feel well. We'll be together this evening, and have a party by ourselves, won't we? And we'll recall the good old days." He kissed the top of her head.

After a while:

"Won't she feel hurt—what do you think?"

"If you write that I am ill, and that you can't leave me, she won't be hurt."

"Very well, that's what I'll say, you are right! This evening

we'll stay by ourselves. We'll go to some big restaurant for dinner. This evening belongs to us alone."

But, after a while, he began:

"Do you know how I have been figuring this thing out? I want to prove to them that you, and you alone have done everything, and that you're the one to whom I'm most grateful. Put on your prettiest gypsy shawl and your earrings, and we'll go over there! We'll have a jolly time! Why, they're all waiting for us. Mr. Gregory will be there—you remember, he's the man who wrote that first story—and others too. After all, one can't go about offending people like that. Why, we'll make Miss Forster look ridiculous. No, we must go today. We'll celebrate by ourselves some other time."

"No, Chaskel, I really cannot go. If you want to go, go by yourself. I'm going to stay home."

"I won't go without you," declared Buchholz firmly, and sat down beside her.

But when it was time to leave, Buchholz became very restless and depressed. He did so want to go to Miss Forster's party, and to see her just once more, wearing her blue velvet dress! His unhappiness was so great that it was reflected in his face, and in every movement he made, and Deborah noticed it; and as always, she simply could not bear to see Buchholz suffer, and now she felt sorry for him. He seemed like a helpless child to her when he was unhappy, and she could never be harsh with him. No matter how keen her own heartache might be, it was even harder for her to see his suffering, and she herself challenged him:

"Chaskel, I can see that you want to go. Do me the favor and go! I'll stay at home."

"Come with me, I beg of you, come with me!"

"What do you need me for?"

"I want to show you off to those people. I want to show them all that today's party must be in *your* honor."

"I cannot go, you must believe me when I say that I cannot go."

"Why won't you do me this favor? Just today, when I am so happy, you want to destroy my happiness."

Now she was determined that he must go to the party.

"I beg of you Chaskel, go, you will be doing me a great favor by going! I have such a bad headache, that I must go to bed!"

"Come with me, I beg of you, come with me!" he pleaded like a child.

His child-like plaint made her heart tremble, it was true, but yield she could not; she was determined not to go.

"Chaskel, I insist on it, you must go! How will it look if you do not come? Miss Forster has done so much for you, you can't offend her, you must not offend her. She is giving a party especially in your honor, and invited guests--you must go and immediately, too!"

"And you, will you be angry with me?"

"Because you are going to Miss Forster's? You talk like a child."

"I'll come home early, I'll stay for only a little while, and come home early. You are so beautiful today, dearest Deborah!" He kissed her.

"Come here, I'll fix your tie for you. You are so disheveled!" And she straightened out his tie, and smoothed his hair for him.

Buchholz was in a hurry, he was afraid of being late.

"Wait, take these flowers with you!" She gave him the violets which he had bought for her on the way to the exhibition. "Give them to Miss Forster; please tell her that I beg to be excused! Tell her that I could not come, and that I ask her to forgive me!"

"I'll tell her." Holding the flowers in his hand, Buchholz hurried away.

. . . . . .

When Deborah was alone, the big room suddenly seemed strange and dark. She had the feeling that she was not in a room, but in an open field in the middle of a snowstorm. The

wind is blowing from all sides, and she does not know the road. But this feeling did not last long; soon it gave way to another sensation; her worry about her difficulties yielded to thoughts of Buchholz.

"Is he to blame, after all?" she asked herself. "He is a child, a helpless child!"

She assumed the rôle of a mother, and deliberated as to what might be best for him to do. Of course she could not fail to recognize what Miss Forster might mean to Buchholz. And as though she were not herself at all, but a stranger, an outsider, she tried once more to compare herself with Miss Forster. With curiously detached self-pity, she said: "What have I to offer Chaskel? Nothing at all, except my poverty!"

"One thing is quite certain," she decided, quite objectively, "Miss Forster will be able to do a great deal for him. He really needs her. She is the one to go to Europe with him. She can teach him how to speak foreign languages. And what a helpful companion she will be; she is a woman who knows how to meet people. He will be happy with her too; it is quite easy to see that he wants to be with her, that he is longing for her. He was so sad that all the world looked dark to him when he thought he was going to have to stay home!"

And this thought gave rise to another feeling which threatened to banish her detached deliberations. She had a vision—a vision of Chaskel sailing away, traveling-bag in hand, and Miss Forster with him. They were together on a big ship, and she, Deborah, was standing on the shore—alone. And once again her heart began to ache with longing, and her nerves were taut, and she beat her head despairingly with her little hands:

"But I love him, I do love him so much! I won't let any one else have him! Why should I, why?"

And then, like a drowning man, she sought to clutch at a straw:

"After all, what has happened? Nothing has happened. How do I know that there is any feeling between them? He admires her—she is a beautiful woman, therefore he admires her. If

he goes away with me, and we two are alone, maybe he'll forget her; of course he'll forget her."

For a little while, but only for a little while, she succeeds in banishing her dark thoughts, but soon cold reason returns. And now she has another vision: Chaskel is living with her, but longing for the other woman. He is absent-minded and nervous, and, although he is with her, his thoughts are elsewhere: "Just as he was only a minute ago, when he was sitting right here with me, but longing for her. I did try to keep him here, and not let him go. But if I go on this way, he will soon hate me. Oh, I'd rather die than have that happen! I'd rather have him long for *me!*"

And then she imagines what Chaskel's life will be like if he goes with the other woman: he is a famous man; she, Deborah, has died or is somewhere far away, and he does not know where she is; he is sitting in a fine large studio and is thinking about her, about the little Deborah with her curly hair, and how they had lived together, and prepared their meals together, and gone out walking together; and nobody knew them, nobody. And is lonely for her--yes, he is lonely for his little curly-haired Deborah.

Her eyes are filled with tears.

"That means parting for ever and ever." Her heart echoes these words.

"No, but it can't be that way, mother--dearest mother!"

That word, unconsciously spoken, frightens her; and a kind of bitter, uncompromising understanding of the situation takes complete possession of her.

"I can see very well that his heart is somewhere else. Yes, it *must* be that way, it shall be that way. I'd rather be separated from him and have him miss me, than be with him, and have him--hate me."

But her heart is not quite ready to give him up.

"After all, nothing has happened! Not a single thing has happened!"

And still she goes on trying to picture their future life to-

gether; but she cannot do it—she is oppressed, cast down as though by a severe illness. Finally she throws it off, gets up, and tosses back her curls with a decisive gesture.

"If it means his happiness—then I am content," she says aloud to herself, and her heart makes her decision for her.

. . . . . .

Miss Forster was greatly disappointed because Deborah did not come to the party, and she tried to insist that Buchholz must go back in a taxi and fetch her. But, in his frank and naïve way, Buchholz delivered his message, saying that Deborah begged to be excused, that she had sent the flowers, and that she would come in person tomorrow. Miss Forster was irritated to think that little Deborah was making scenes because of jealousy, and bothered about her no more. Later on the two poets, Mendel and Freier, wanted to go and fetch Deborah, and Moscovici too called out that he was going to go for her with a taxi, and would be back with her within half an hour; but the party was so amusing, and there was so much to drink, and the guests were in so gay a mood and so happy about Buchholz's success, that the girl was soon forgotten by every one.

Late that night the guests had already grown expansive with drink, when Mendel issued his proclamation of "everything is permitted today." The guests paired off and withdrew into the secluded corners of the room; the vehement controversies died down, and were replaced by more intimate conversations. Even the candles which were flickering here and there in brass candelabra seemed to grow dimmer. The guests, sentimental with wine, made maudlin declarations of love to one another, scarcely caring whether the object of these declarations happened to be a man or a woman.

On a sofa in a corner sat Miss Forster—a little tired, to be sure, but in good humor; her hair, which had been so neatly arranged at the beginning of the evening, was disheveled now, and fell about her shoulders in loosened strands.

She was wearing, not her blue velvet dress, but one of amber-colored silk; and it was fine and sheer, revealing the supple lines of her figure and the beautiful texture of her skin; her arms were bare to the shoulders. Her feet were shod in silk too, and it seemed to Buchholz that she fairly floated along when she walked, moving with rhythmic grace.

Buchholz had been following Miss Forster all evening. He watched her feverishly and longed to be close enough to her to feel her breath on his cheek.

But Miss Forster avoided him cleverly; and whenever she vanished, she left her characteristic fragrance and a fleeting memory of a smile in her wake, exciting him the more.

Buchholz was sure that she was doing this purposely, and on any other occasion he would have lacked the courage to approach her. But today had been a day of success, and that gave him self-confidence; the wine he had been drinking robbed him of the last bit of self-consciousness; and that sweet alluring fragrance was so seductive that he forgot everything and dared everything.

Finally! Finally he found her sitting alone on a sofa and he sat down beside her without saying a word.

She did not move away.

He looked at her pleadingly, and murmured:

"Miss Isabel." It was the first time he had called her by her given name.

She did not answer, and kept her eyes half-closed.

"Miss Isabel!"

"What is it, Buchholz?"

He grew bolder; perhaps because she had answered him so gently, perhaps because he was intoxicated by her fragrance —and he came closer. Her dress was soft and sheer, and her flesh so cool, so smooth, so firm. Buchholz burned with desire, his lips and nostrils quivered, his eyes darkened, and he leaned forward in his excitement.

"Isabel!"

She did not move away, and he noticed that she was trem-

bling. She kept her eyes closed, her bosom rose and fell rapidly. They sat there for a long time.

Then he quite seemed to lose consciousness. He slid to the floor, he fondled her little feet.

Slowly, decisively, she drew them away.

"Isabel!"

"Why are you doing that?"

"I don't know."

"And what is going to happen if I fall in love with you? Do you think I am made of stone?" she asked with a smile; it seemed to Buchholz that he could hear tears in her voice, and his heart grew tender.

"What shall I do?" he asked, trembling.

"You must stay with Deborah."

"You are right!" Buchholz accentuated his words with a nod.

He was silent now, and bowed his head as though he were considering the matter. Then he raised his eyes again, looking up at Isabel with the eyes of a child, and in a voice that trembled, said:

"But I can't, I, I..."

"You must stay with Deborah," said Isabel firmly. "She has made a great sacrifice for you; you don't even know how great. But I—I know, I know!" Her eyes glistened.

"You are right, you are right." Buchholz buried his head in his hands.

She was sorry for him.

"Isabel." Once again Buchholz turned to her with pleading eyes.

"Buchholz, be a man! This is a time when we must both be strong! Remember that I am only a woman. Deborah—Deborah must not suffer. She must not. Promise me that, Buchholz!"

"You are right, you are right!" Buchholz nodded.

"Let's shake hands. We'll be friends, won't we?—good, faithful friends."

Buchholz buried his face in her little hands.

"And be strong, remember Deborah!"

"Deborah is my sister."

Isabel laughed, her little white teeth sparkled.

"But you are not Deborah's brother. Well, Buchholz, now shake hands, and remember that you are my friend, my good, good friend!"

He noticed how cold her fingers were.

"Your soul is in your finger-tips."

"Buchholz, no more of that, not ever, do you understand?"

She arose and went away.

. . . . . .

All the way home Buchholz thought of Isabel. Deborah was entirely obliterated from his consciousness. The touch of Isabel's body had unleashed a monster in him—a fiery monster which devoured all other emotions, duties and memories. His nostrils were filled with her fragrance, and the thought of her cool, soft limbs wove a flaming net of glowing colors round him, trapping him in its meshes.

"And that can never come true! I shall never touch her cool, soft skin, nor drink in the fragrance of her breath, nor stroke her wavy hair. Never will her smile or kind words be meant for me, only for others, for others."

He cannot give her up.

Under a heap of cooling ashes a little ember flickered up —that was Deborah, who admonished him like a stern creditor. But when he tried to fan the little ember under the ashes back to life, the fragrance of Miss Forster's body seemed to extinguish it again.

With thoughts like these he arrived home. It was very late. He sat down in a chair and stayed there, instead of lying down to sleep.

"Chaskel," called Deborah, who was not sleeping, "is that you?"

"Yes," he answered in a hollow voice which she had never heard him use before.

"Why are you sitting there by yourself?" she asked him.

He got up, went over to her bed, and sat down on the edge of it, without saying a word.

"What is it, Chaskel?" she asked, filled with tender pity.

In the darkness he was unable to see her face, nor could she his. They were aware of one another's presence, that was all.

"Deborah." He bent his head down to her.

She took him in her arms.

"What is it, Chaskel? Tell me!"

"Deborah, you are my sister, my sister for always, my eternal sister, for always—aren't you?"

"Of course I am your sister, you know that very well," she answered; her voice was hoarse.

"And I am your brother, your only brother...."

For a moment she was silent. All he could hear was the beating of her heart.

"You love Miss Forster, don't you?" she asked, with a note of curiosity in her voice.

Buchholz did not answer; he merely buried his face in her bosom as a child might have done.

"And you want to go to Europe with her?"

Buchholz tried to close her mouth with his hand.

"Why are you ashamed of it? We can speak about it quite frankly, can't we?" she says, and tries to keep her voice steady; at the same time she presses his head more closely against her. "I have been thinking about it too. She will be a better wife for you than I. She has more education than I have, is better than I, prettier than I.... I should only stand in your way, and she can be of help to you."

"Why do you talk like that?" Buchholz is weeping.

"Why not, Chaskel? For a long time I have been wanting to tell you myself that it would be better for you to go to Europe with Miss Forster. I don't want to go with you. I'd rather stay here."

"Don't you love me any more?" asks Buchholz.

"Why shouldn't I love you, you child?" Deborah laughs. "But to go to Europe with you, that I cannot do. Miss Forster must go with you. She is more suited to you, and you will be happier with her."

"Don't say any more, don't say any more, I beg of you!"

"Why can't we talk about it? Why are you crying? I don't want you to cry. It isn't nice for a man to cry, especially a big, strong man like you."

"And who will be here with you?"

"I have thought it all out. I'll go back to my family. My father is alone, and the children are still small. There is no one there to take care of them."

"Deborah, what nonsense are you talking! Deborah! My Deborah!"

"Don't cry, I beg of you, don't cry." She draws him to her breast, as a mother would caress her child. "I don't like to see you cry."

. . . . . .

In the morning Buchholz regretted what had happened the night before, and swore to Deborah that he loved only her, and would go to Europe with no one but her. "I won't go at all without you. I am going over to see Miss Forster right now to tell her that."

Deborah listened with a smile, and nodded, without saying a word. Her manner, her laugh, her satisfaction gave no sign that she had something quite different in mind. But upon her lips there now played an entirely new kind of smile, one that Buchholz had never known before.

He hurried away to inform Miss Forster that it was quite decided that he was to go to Europe with Deborah. But, before he ever returned, Deborah had packed up her few possessions, and, carrying the same old-fashioned little carpet-bag with which she had arrived, she left Buchholz; she went away to fulfill her secret mission elsewhere—that secret mission which had been imposed upon her as a heritage from her mother.